Commentary

Volume Sixty, Number Four, October 1975

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Books in Review:

Hilton Kramer on "Ragtime"
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Chester E. Finn, Jr./Oscar Gass
Edward Rothstein/Elliott Abrams

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Commentary

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Letters from Readers

American Jews

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Most of Nathan Glazer's article, "The Exposed American Jew" [June], struck me as exactly right in tone and substance. But his usual sensitivity to ambiguity and complexity is strangely absent in his discussion of affirmative action.

From reading Mr. Glazer's remarks on affirmative action one would think that there is nothing wrong with American society that putting HEW out of business wouldn't cure. Michael Walzer has written that "benign quotas" can be opposed without guilt and anxiety only by one who believes American society to be fundamentally just, with almost all of our citizens having what they deserve. To reiterate a point made by Michael Harrington, Lyndon Johnson, and others a few years ago which now appears to be forgotten by the great majority of those who used to care about it, there are still millions of Americans living poverty-stricken and wretched lives in the richest nation in the history of the world. Affirmative action represents one attempt (perhaps misguided) to remedy that. Jewish Americans are burdened by affirmative-action programs not because they are Jewish but because they are deemed not to fall within the category of a disadvantaged group. This may be of scant consolation to an illegitimately deprived Jewish individual. But it might be some consolation to him (or at least to the social scientist analyzing his plight) to know that he is no worse off than his Wasp or Irish compatriot. The whole subject is a vexed one. Perhaps *any* legal classification in terms of ethnic group membership is so potentially dangerous to individual rights as to be wrong at any time. That would seem to be Mr. Glazer's view. I just wish it were more of a *problem* for him.

Affirmative-action programs seem especially menacing to those who cherish the ideal of an ethnically blind legal system because of the obsessive attention they pay to ethnic group identity. But Mr. Glazer's argument can be used against almost any liberal social measure which seeks to reduce the gap between the wealthy and the poor. Presumably a more progressive income tax than the one we presently have would tax many Jewish Americans (and other wealthier-than-average citizens) at somewhat higher levels than they presently are taxed. Mr. Glazer's doctrine of the importance of effects might lead to a position which would be opposed to a more progressive tax for this reason.

The crux of the dispute between us can be stated simply. I believe we have a moral obligation to try and help the disadvantaged, even at the cost of some limited harm to others who are deserving. Mr. Glazer does not.

PETER CONNOLLY
West Hartford, Connecticut

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Like almost everything that Nathan Glazer writes, "The Exposed American Jew" is informed, intelligent, and stimulating. . . . I agree with most of his points, and he offers his unhappy predictions so tentatively that I am not inclined to criticize them. My comment is restricted to one small but important point.

A substantial educational task is required, Mr. Glazer writes, and I suggest that one way to begin is to abandon the Left-Right dichotomy as a framework for political analysis. When this is related to narrowly economic issues, it can still have a limited relevance to the present complex world. But, more typically, when the issues are partly or wholly social, cultural, or political, then the notion that Good and Evil are divided so simply is misleading.

The "right-wing backlash" that Mr. Glazer and many others expected never developed. Later Mr. Glazer identifies the "right wing" as the present survivals, if any, of such past movements as the Know-Nothings and the Ku Klux Klan. But by the ordinary understanding of the designation it would certainly include also, say, William Buckley, whose position on Israel has been strongly and consistently in line with Mr. Glazer's argument. Indeed, it would include Nathan Glazer himself, with his blatant support of American democracy and his blunt denunciations of Communist tyranny.

And on the other side Mr. Glazer finds it "startling" that such liberal organs as the New York

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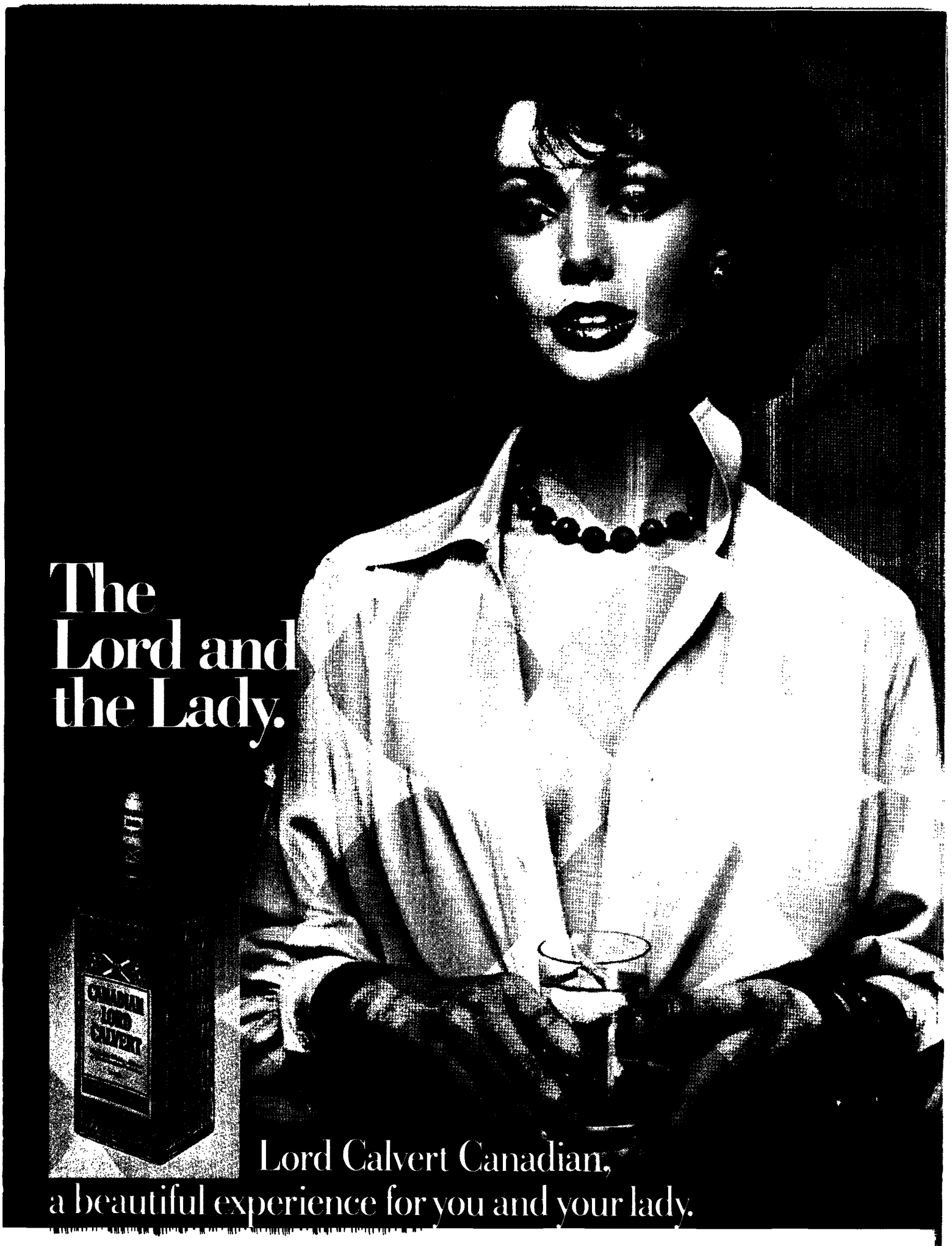

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Times fail to make the—to him—crucial distinction between the open, democratic society of Israel and the authoritarian regimes of the Arab states. How long, O Lord, shall the *Times* retain its undeserved reputation as the defender of democracy? From the early 1930's on, this paper has presented the Soviet Union, including all of its Stalinist elements, in the most favorable light that the facts known in the West permitted. Before most Americans knew of Castro's existence, the *Times* correspondent was picturing him as a bearded hero. The reporting from Vietnam consistently followed the line that the South was corrupt and undemocratic and the North represented the true will of the people. The *Times* is opposed to authoritarian regimes only if they are allied to the United States; for at least two generations all the news that is fit to print about those in the Communist camp has been prettied up. With Israel linked implacably to the United States and therefore defined as a local agent of Western imperialism, and with the Arab states more or less associated with Soviet maneuvers in the area, it was inevitable that the general orientation of liberal news media would overcome the reluctance of American Jews to condemn Israel.

Even so, liberals remain highly vulnerable to a charge of anti-Semitism. In the situation that Mr. Glazer analyzes, the main enemy is neither the Wallace movement (though I agree that it bears watching) nor such aberrant types as Noam Chomsky. It is the typical liberal, as represented in the news media, that Mr. Glazer cites. One wonders what the reaction would be if the Anti-Defamation League joined the tiny, but extraordinarily effective, Accuracy in Media in calling to the public's attention each time James Reston and his confreres strayed from demonstrable fact on matters pertaining to the Near East and American Jews. Nothing, I suggest, would be more effective in taking the bite out of Mr. Glazer's forecasts about the exposed American Jew.

WILLIAM PETERSEN
Department of Sociology
Ohio State University
Columbus, Ohio

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Yes, the American Jew is "exposed," but hardly in the ways discussed in Nathan Glazer's superficial and wrongheaded essay. Let me discuss some of Mr. Glazer's threats. . . .

What Mr. Glazer euphemistically calls "the new ethnic awareness" may just as easily be seen as a boon, not a threat, to American-Jewish survival. Consider the growth of Jewish studies, of which Robert Alter has eloquently written in these pages ["What Jewish Studies Can Do," October 1974], the phenomenon of the Jackson Amendment, and the continued public support for American military aid to Israel, as documented recently by Louis Harris in the New York *Times Magazine,* as well as by the Javits-Schweiker-Bayh letter in support of military and economic aid to Israel, which was signed by 73 other Senators just before President Ford's meeting with President Sadat in Salzburg this past June.

Mr. Glazer mentions other prominent ethnic minorities—the Lebanese, Chinese, and Armenians among others—but adds that these groups are small, none consisting of more than a few hundred thousand people, whereas there are six million American Jews and they form significant concentrations in key professions and sectors of society. While the position of any ethnic minority in this country is *potentially* vulnerable, what exactly is it that makes the Jews *particularly* vulnerable? One can deduce that the Jews' very size—their disproportionate political influence—makes them *less,* not *more,* "exposed" than other groups ("exposed" here meaning vulnerable). And to the truism that "Jews have played a distinctive role as a target for hostility in Western society" must be added the qualification of the distinctive political and social tradition of the United States, where, while there has certainly been an ongoing tradition of anti-Semitism, such anti-Semitism *per se* has never comprised a mass movement able to achieve national political power; and the terrible legacy of the Holocaust, which should give and has given Jews a powerful, visceral incentive for group strength.

Finally, given Spinoza, Marx, Freud, Einstein, Buber, Trotsky, Ben-Gurion, and countless others, I am astonished by Mr. Glazer's unequivocal claim that "There are good reasons why Jews throughout their history in Western Christendom have preferred to avoid attention."

On Israel: is the whole question of the American Jew's relation to Israel really reducible to support for a "pariah state" whose people are threatened by "massacre"? At a time when the debate on Israeli foreign policy within Israel itself is at a vastly more sophisticated level (see Alan Dowty, "Israel's Palestinian Policy," *Midstream,* April 1975), and when Israel, according to a recent report on the CBS *Evening News,* has the capacity to produce atomic bombs, I am most disappointed by Mr. Glazer's simplistic approach.

I agree with Mr. Glazer that the American Jew should help support Israel's struggle for security and peace, but I disagree with his implicit assumption that he or she should do so uncritically, merely "shelling out" his or her $167 more than is contributed now, and lobbying for more American arms. Is additional military aid really the only way to achieve security at last for Israel? Is Mr. Glazer, as an American Jew, entirely satisfied with Israel's policy thus far toward the "occupied territories," the Palestinians, and the Arabs?

I am also aghast at Mr. Glazer's statement that Israel was established "to make Jews like everyone else." The creation of the Jewish state may have been to give the Jews an autonomous territorial and political entity like "everyone else," but that is hardly the same thing as making "Jews like everyone else," as even a cursory reading of the Israeli Declaration of Independence reveals.

Also, in speculating about the mass-media attitude toward Israel, Mr. Glazer refers to a few articles from one newspaper and one periodical—the New York *Times* and *Time,* respectively. He errs in not offering us conclusions drawn from a methodical study based on a scientific sampling, or even a more thorough impressionistic sampling of the mass media. Even the Op-Ed page of the *Times,* to which he refers, has offered strong support for Israel from Elie Wiesel, Abba Eban, and others.

Most importantly, Mr. Glazer states that "the only lasting basis for United States support of Israel" is "that the United States is committed to the independence of free nations and of democratic na-

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tions most especially," to which he adds: "One of our problems is that so many American opinion leaders no longer believe this, and that so few of our young people ever did." As one of those—admittedly skeptical—"young people," I nevertheless do not appreciate being subsumed under another of Mr. Glazer's sweeping generalizations. Rather than pontificating about "opinion leaders" and "young people," it would be helpful if he would be explicit as to exactly whom is he talking about. However, I find the "no longer" of the above quote revealing: perhaps, after a decade which has seen American support for flagrantly undemocratic regimes in South Vietnam, South Korea, the Philippines, post-Allende Chile, Brazil, Spain, Saudi Arabia, and Greece and Portugal before their respective coups, a bit of skepticism about American support for democracy abroad is warranted. . . .

What has this to do with Israel? Simply put: it is a naive distortion of recent American foreign policy to assume that this country's supposed support for "freedom and democracy" abroad has become enshrined as a principle that will govern our foreign-policy conduct in the future. Rather, foreign policy is overwhelmingly, if not exclusively, dictated by what the textbooks say: a country's own best interests at a given time. No amount of support for Israel—financial or otherwise—by American Jews will insure Washington's support of Jerusalem if American and Israeli interests diverge; indeed, as Theodore Draper has pointed out in COMMENTARY ["The United States and Israel," April], those interests have *already* begun to diverge. But there is nothing "new" in this: surely Mr. Glazer remembers the precedent of 1956-57, when a nascent concern for détente brought the U.S. and USSR together once before on behalf of Egypt and against an ongoing Israeli presence in the Sinai desert.

How then, is the American Jew "exposed"? Simply, in that realm which Mr. Glazer should know best, but about which he writes least: socially, especially in terms of assimilation. The causes of assimilation are complex, having to do with the nature of American-Jewish prosperity, mobility, and suburban life; the quality or lack of quality of much of Jewish education; the relative lack of a pervasive anti-Semitism, the sometimes plutocratic nature of American Jewish communal leadership; and, not least, . . . the nature of publications such as COMMENTARY which publish distressingly little material about modern Jewish culture, theology, and philosophy, history, or even internal communal issues. . . .

In short, if the American Jew is "exposed," it is hardly because of Mr. Glazer's "new" reasons, but because of the "old" ones, the lack of sufficient positive Jewish identity and assertion in American culture.

DAVID M. SZONYI
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The eerie touch-and-go quality which now informs American-Israeli relations amply justifies Nathan Glazer's reiteration of the

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responsibility of the American Jewish community for making Israel's case in Washington. There is, however, something disturbing about the precise case which he wants American Jews to present. Pragmatic considerations, as he correctly notes, are too unreliable a basis upon which to found American support for Israel: Foggy Bottom pragmatists would look no further than the Persian Gulf. But in the principled American commitment which he proposes as an alternative, Mr. Glazer adopts an innocence which is unbecoming after the protracted Vietnam debacle, and which, more importantly, can only work against Israel's short- and long-term right to determine its own destiny.

Mr. Glazer believes that the United States should commit itself to Israel because "the United States defends democracies, and it defends the independence of small, threatened nations." But the United States does not defend democracies—Mr. Glazer's rationalizations of U.S. policy in Spain, Portugal, and Greece are uncomfortably like that macabre logic according to which you burn a village in order to save it, and I doubt whether the Spaniards, Portuguese, and Greeks who suffered under their respective regimes would have been convinced. (Mr. Glazer's comment about Chile is just unbelievable. Nor did his, and others', very justifiable fears of Communist success in Portugal induce the U.S. to lift a finger in support of Soares and the Socialist majority.) The United States has not so much defended the independence of small, threatened nations as it has threatened the independence of small and beleaguered ones. If there has been a common denominator in all American foreign policy of recent times, it is one of ruthless and unprincipled intervention in the affairs of whatever country the U.S. has viewed as either positively or negatively relevant to its interests. It is, after all, one thing to act democratically, and quite another ingeniously to label your interests democracy.

The much-vaunted and somewhat welcome recoil from the 60's which is now in progress might just throw the baby out with the bathwater. While it was not at all surprising that the enthusiastically heralded orgy of American post-Vietnam introspection never came off, it is very distressing to find Mr. Glazer's litany of American virtues in its place. Particularly in light of the investigative revelations now emanating daily from Washington, Mr. Glazer's confidence in America seems utterly unjustified, and quite wilful. Perhaps one could account for such present perceptions of America and its relation to Israel in terms of a legitimate disenchantment with the détente myth: Somalia is only the most recent of a long list of indications that the Russians are playing it both ways—indeed, that for all the ostensible sanity of Big Power leaders concerning nuclear weapons, the spheres-of-influence planet of the cold war is to their minds by no means a thing of the past. (Helsinki cannot end the cold war, but at best temporarily cordialize it.) And so one can reason that Israel not being Communist, and Russia being evil (not to mention anti-Semitic), Israel obviously belongs in the American camp, because America is good. (All of which is as simplistic as the equations of the devout Left, which also sees America and Israel as essentially the same, although it judges their identity a bit differently.)

But, firstly, though Israel is of course a democracy and is committed to many principles to which America is, at least in theory, committed—a similarity of purposes which is of course a salient part of the Israeli case in Washington—Israel is also (or perhaps once was) committed to something other than an American-style polity. Israel is by no means, nor should it ever become, a little America in the Middle East. It was a fundamental, perhaps *the* fundamental, tenet of Zionism that the Jewish state would be sovereign to determine its own internal and external policy.

Secondly, and more practically, the behavior of the U.S. toward its friends has not been such as to inspire confidence: the U.S. has a nasty habit of often supporting its friends the way a rope supports a hanging man. If there is anything which Kissinger cannot tolerate, it is the slightest deviation by allies from Washington's grand design. The pressure tactics which he and his President recently applied to Israel are in this respect very telling and should serve as a warning: when Ford and Kissinger tell Rabin that they are acting in Israel's best interests, what they are really doing is attempting to decide for Israel what her best interests are. It was Israel's refusal to acquiesce in such tutelage in matters of its own survival which to a large extent accounted for the ungraceful stalls in the negotiations which eventually led to the most recent agreements.

The present situation in Israel vis-à-vis the U.S. is not at all dissimilar to that of those countries, in Europe and elsewhere, which are likewise trying to do their own work themselves, to steer a relatively self-determined course and avoid the kind of Mephistophelian support which is the only support America and Russia know how to extend. To rush headlong and completely into the arms of Washington the way Mr. Glazer suggests might in its own way become as much of a threat to a sovereign Israel as its hostile neighbors. The really urgent task for the American Jewish community is to argue persuasively for a *respectful* American commitment to Israel, for various ideological and strategic reasons appropriate, but neither patronizing nor paternal; to delineate a correspondence of interests which does not require of Israel an unqualified homogeneity or subordination. Of course this is a far more difficult task than that suggested by Mr. Glazer—to ask such respect of Kissinger is like asking water of a stone—but it is at least more candid about the squalid American style in international relations as well as about Israel's hopes and ambitions for itself.

LEON WIESELTIER
New York City

NATHAN GLAZER writes:

To Peter Connolly: I specifically did *not* criticize affirmative action because it would hurt Jews directly. I think that evaluating any policy in terms of whether it is good or bad for Jews is crude, vulgar, and ineffective. If it is just or right or good for the commonwealth, it is a good policy. And so many policies that statistically can be said to "hurt Jews" more than others (because more Jews are businessmen, or professors, or city-dwellers, or prosperous, or what not) are policies I would fully support. What I object to in affirmative action is, first, that it is designed to make ethnic and racial distinctions the bases for specific

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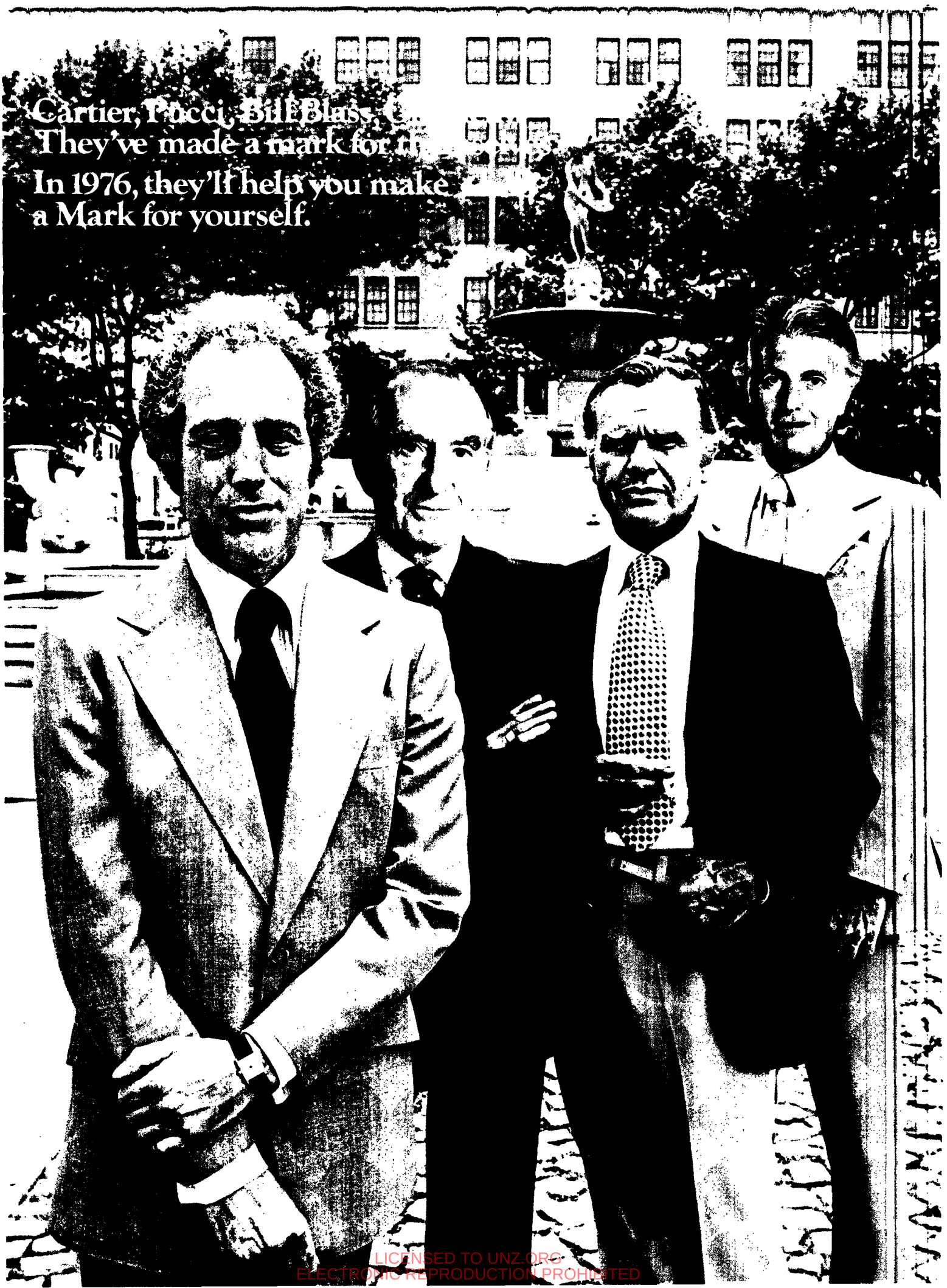

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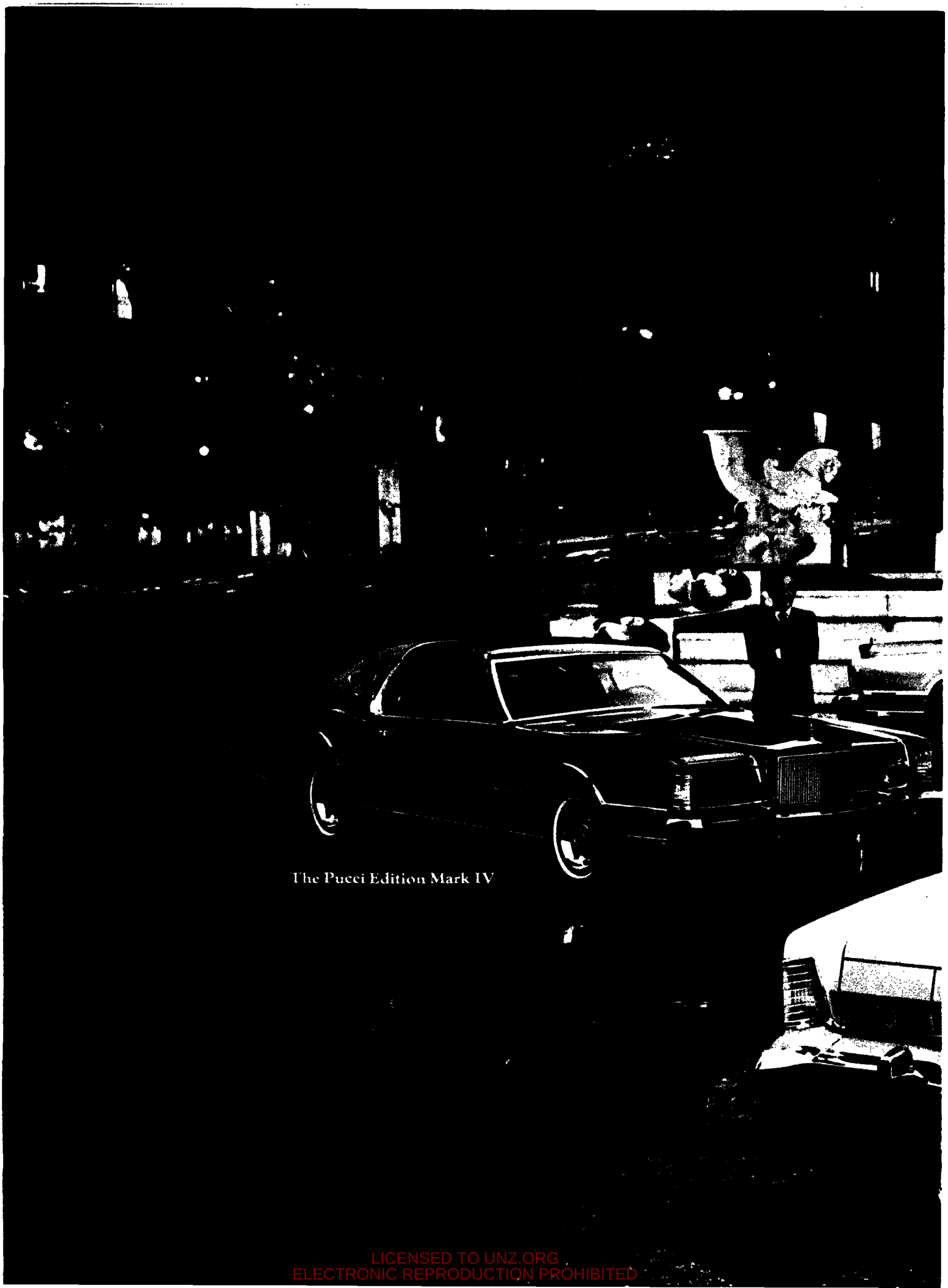

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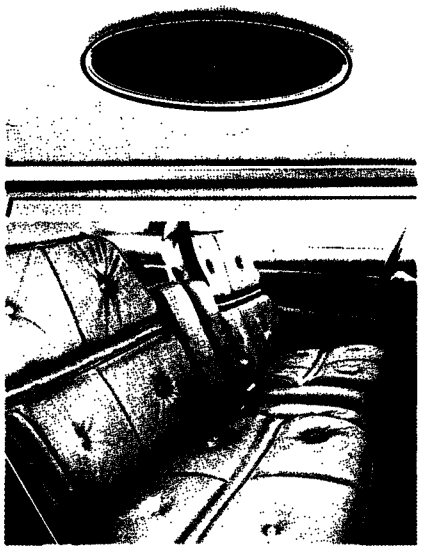
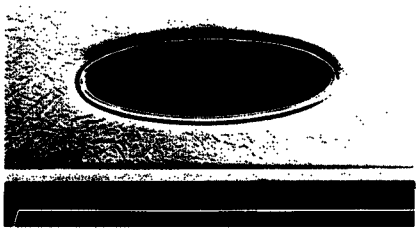


Cartier has made its mark with precious jewelry. So the new 1976 Cartier Edition Mark IV is a creamy grey—the color of fresh water pearls. Its interior sustains the monochromatic look with grey velour or leather-and-vinyl. The opera window bears the golden Cartier signature, as does an identifying plate for the instrument panel. This plate will be engraved with your own name as well.

The Pucci Edition Mark IV.



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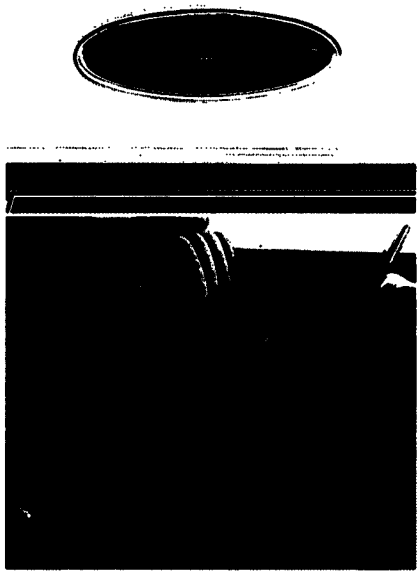
The Bill Blass Edition Mark IV.



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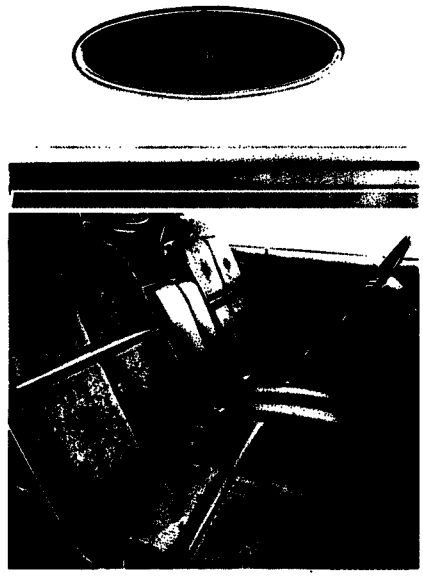

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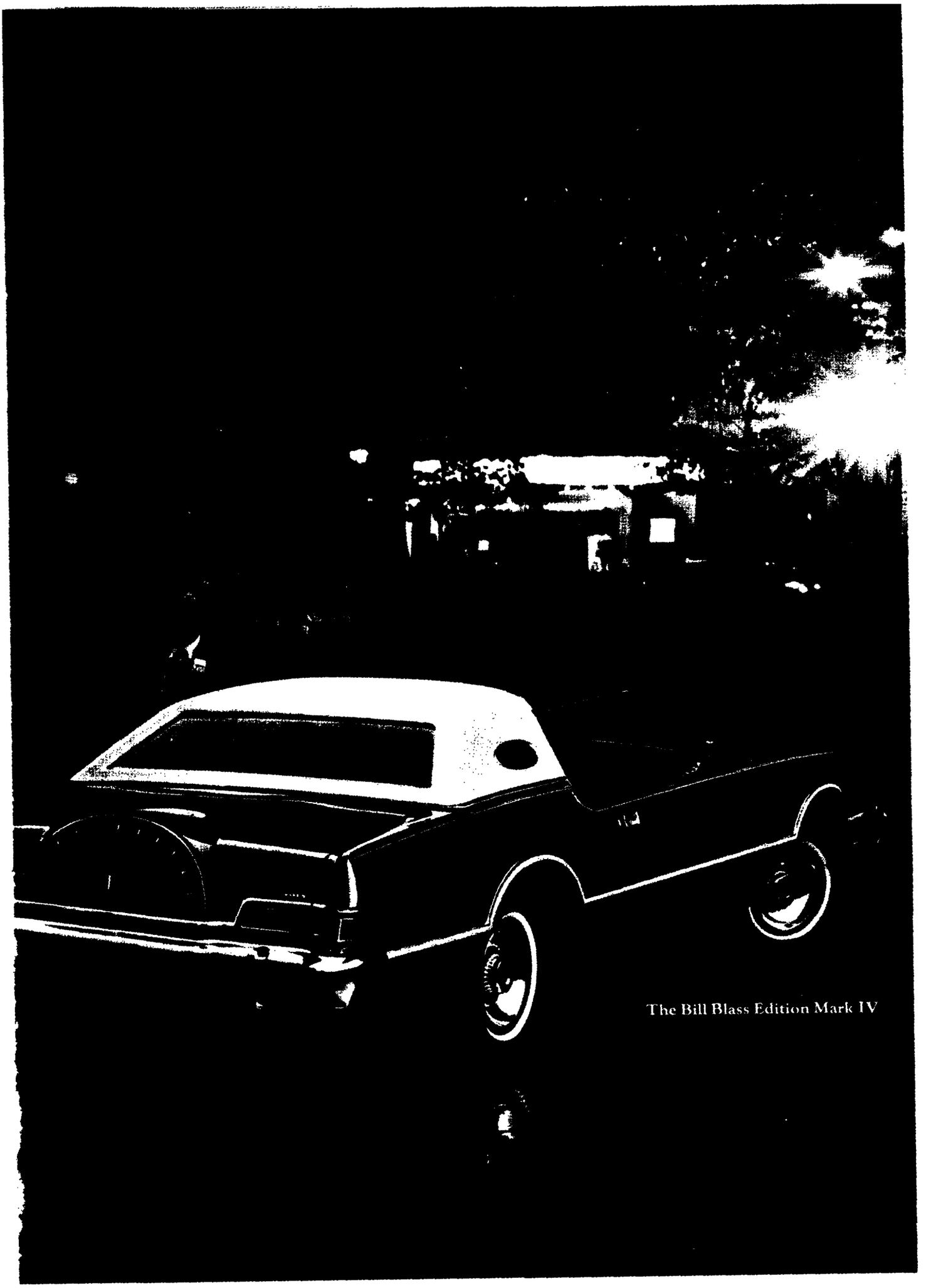

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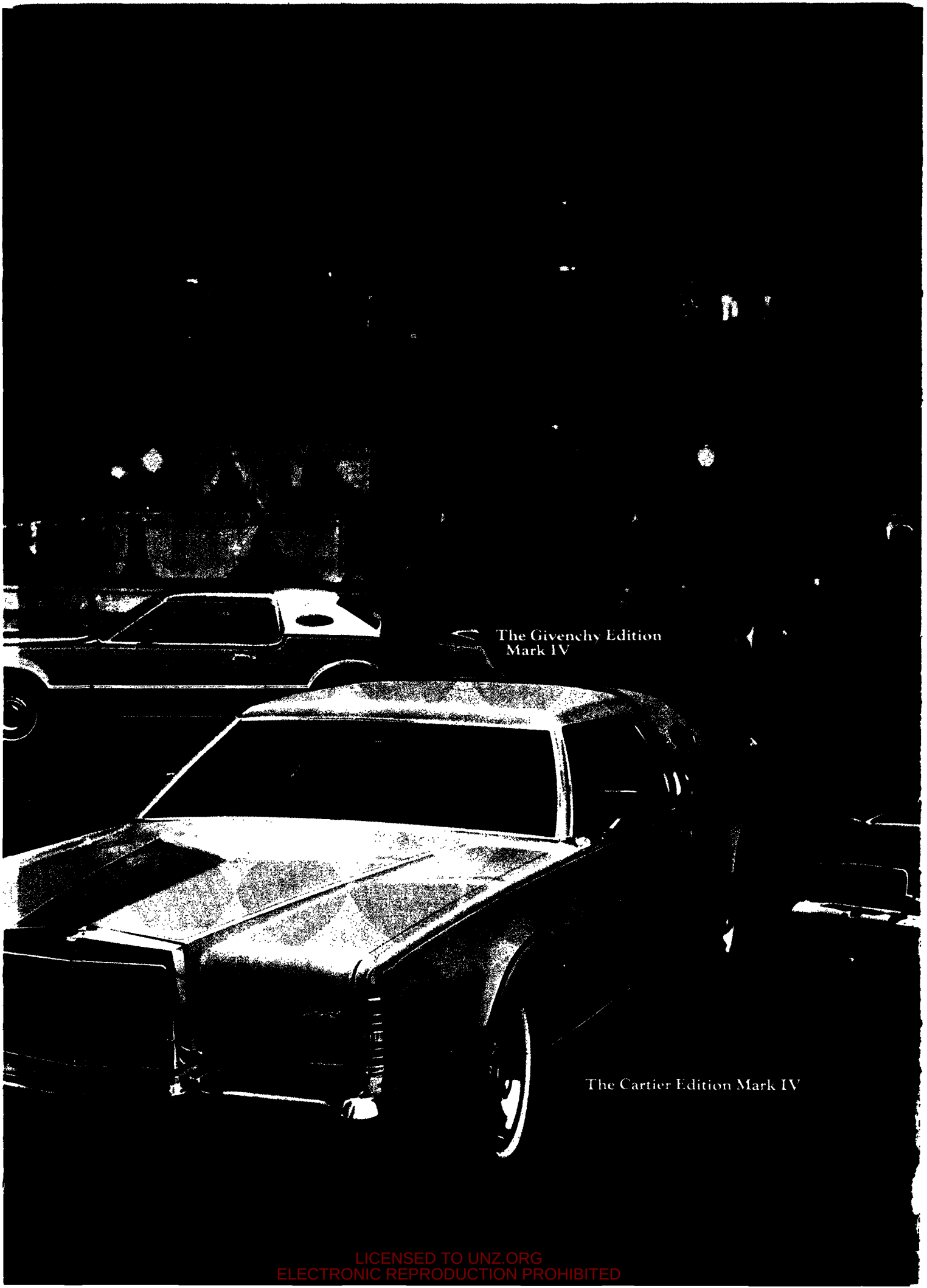

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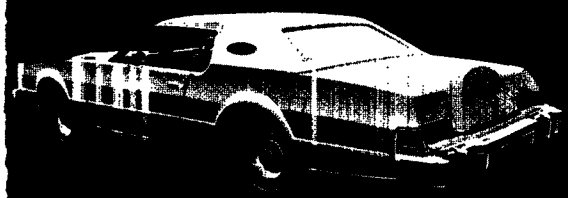

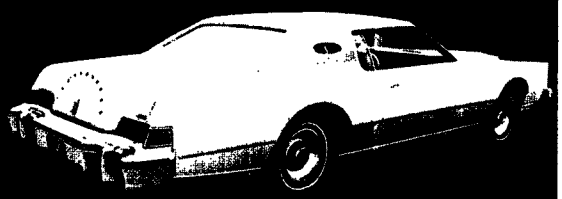

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public action, either to harm or to benefit. I believe these distinctions will become permanent (because it is difficult to withdraw a benefit once given), will spread to include additional minority groups, and, in a complex multi-ethnic society such as ours, the results will inevitably be divisive. Finally, if we are interested in helping the poor and the underprivileged, we should help those specific categories, and not *all* blacks, Spanish-surnamed-Americans, Asian-Americans, and the like, for in each of these groups varying percentages of individuals are poor and underprivileged. Thus my argument *cannot* be used against *any* liberal measure: it can only be used against measures which say, "because you are of this racial or ethnic group, you will, for that reason *alone,* receive a governmental benefit, or be denied one."

This is my basic argument against affirmative action: it is also true that, speaking in a Jewish context, I said groups which are "better off" (Wasps, Jews) will now be considered at fault, responsible, for the fate of groups which are worse off. It is only this *political* consequence of accepting affirmative action that I see as a danger to Jews. (Wasps may survive the reputation of being better off because they exploited others; there are enough of them. But as for Jews. . . .)

To William Petersen: I quite agree that "Left" and "Right" seem to have outlived much of their usefulness. I prefer a distinction which emphasizes freedom or its absence.

To David Szonyi and Leon Wieseltier: Here I concentrate only on the position of the State of Israel and the basis on which American support may be retained. I do not understand people who say, as Messrs. Szonyi and Wieseltier do, that the United States has no interest in the support of democracies and small states, that it favors dictatorships as well as its own interests, and yet, in spite of all this, either (a) Israel can survive (Szonyi), or (b) the United States may still be induced to support Israel (Wieseltier). How does Mr. Szonyi expect Israel to survive when it is surrounded by enemy states increasing in wealth and military power; when the United States is the *only* state which will provide Israel with the modern arms necessary for its defense; when Portugal, Greece, and Turkey no longer provide stopping places for the provisioning of Israel in the event of war; when all but an occasional European state will at best abstain when Israel is denounced or expelled from every international forum in the world as—yes—a pariah state?

Neither Mr. Szonyi nor Mr. Wieseltier thinks that the support of Israel is in the American interest. What then do they expect? Do they really believe that Israel will survive through its own atom bombs? That we can convert the "Mephistophelian" support which Mr. Wieseltier believes is the only kind the United States knows how to extend, into "respectful" support for Israel on the basis of (unspecified) ideological and strategic common interests? I would urge Mr. Szonyi and Mr. Wieseltier to reconsider what they have written in regard to American policy and its fundamental thrust. The "flagrantly undemocratic" regimes we have supported in South Vietnam and South Korea were infinitely more democratic and free than the totalitarian regimes which threatened them, aside from the fact that they were willing to live at peace with their totalitarian neighbors, and their neighbors were not. Can they be unaware that our policies in relation to Portugal, Spain, Greece, and Turkey (which were in any case all freer and more open than the Communist states) were designed solely to support NATO, an anti-Communist alliance which miraculously has kept Europe prosperous and free and peaceful despite the overwhelming military power of Soviet Russia now for thirty years?

I would plead with Mr. Szonyi and Mr. Wieseltier to reconsider the basic thrust of American foreign policy, despite its errors, failures, disasters. If they *still* conclude that American foreign policy is indifferent to democracy and the independence of small states, then they should honestly face up to what must happen to Israel. They cannot preserve both their view of the United States and their hope that Israel will survive.

Toward Equality

To the Editor of Commentary:

In Robert Nisbet's thought-provoking critique of the New Equalitarians ["The New Despotism," June], whose aspirations to equality of condition or result overshadow mere equality of opportunity, there is so much that rings true (or at least partly true) that it becomes all the more important to fault him where fault is apparent.

Among other emerging aspects of our society which Mr. Nisbet finds disquieting is "open admissions," which he mentions critically in two places. Surely there is much to be said against this practice, with its built-in lowering of standards, wherever it is imposed broadly on first-rate institutions. But Mr. Nisbet writes as if "open admissions" were a novel phenomenon of our time, a construct of the New Equalitarians. In fact, we have had "open admissions" in America for many decades, though it has scarcely been labeled as such. For children of the well-to-do, there has been no dearth of quality private colleges where admissions standards were sufficiently elastic to accommodate high-school graduates with the equivalent of a "gentleman's C"—provided only that their parents had the wherewithal to foot the tuition bills, and particularly so if their parents and grandparents were alumni who had contributed generously to alma mater's fundraising endeavors. At least some of the current outcry against "open admissions," it would seem, stems from the fact that college doors have now been opened to underachieving students from welfare and working-class families, affording them some of the opportunities which heretofore had been reserved for affluent underachievers.

As Mr. Nisbet suggests, imposed equality does indeed clash with certain kinds of liberty. In this and numerous other insights, though he has given us a significant segment of truth, it is far from the whole of it. While exalting liberty (and, in my view, properly so), he omits any mention of the immense chasm which still separates people in America who are economically comfortable, and hence free to choose from among a variety of life's options, from those who are struggling merely to survive, whose real choices and liberties are considerably more narrow. Large numbers of children in our urban ghettos, for example, trapped within the pathology of the poverty subculture, as a practical matter are not free to

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actualize their full potentialities and do not enjoy equality of opportunity, let alone equality of condition or result.

SAMUEL RABINOVE
White Plains, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Robert Nisbet seems to regard government growth as the sinister result of the recent expansion of the concept of equality. But this view is not borne out by history. The modern state grew larger than a mere nightwatchman of society for reasons other than egalitarianism. There was first the need to maintain defense forces in a world where warfare was growing constantly more costly and frightening; second, there was the need to provide for internal order in a society whose complexity was growing faster than laws could be drafted to cope with it; and, finally, there was the object of fostering economic growth. From the earliest days of the republic, with Hamilton's "Report on Manufactures," economic growth has been an object of the central government. Government economic policy has been manifested in tariffs, fair-trade laws, internal improvements, and subsidies.

Government action for social and economic equality, on the other hand, is a very recent development. . . . The social legislation of the 30's was not concerned with equality at all, it was aimed at putting a floor under economic misery. The egalitarianism Mr. Nisbet is attacking has been a factor in governmental policy for slightly less than ten years.

He attacks this egalitarianism as inimical to human freedom. In some respects it is. The major area of conflict between the new equality and personal freedom is in the area of an individual's right to acquire and possess above-average material wealth. . . .

The quest for economic aggrandizement has been a mighty force for economic growth. It requires an unplanned, rapidly expanding economy. But this situation cannot continue forever—our resources are finite. Energy resources are a case in point. The atmosphere, along with everything else, is already suffering from the strain this kind of economy imposes. The new equality provides one means of bringing the acquisitive impulse behind the excessive growth of our economy under control. . . .

Growth of centralized power in itself belittles the individual, but this occurs as a result of corporate growth as well as from government expansion. The answer is to expand direct citizen involvement in major administrative decisions rather than to wish that large accumulations of power will disappear. . . .

LARRY DALKOFF
Carlsbad, California

ROBERT NISBET writes:

On the whole, it seems to me, the practices of the private colleges Samuel Rabinove writes about have been significantly changed since World War II, and much for the better. Admissions criteria have been more responsive to intellectual merit. In any event, it is not anything easily referred to by the adjective "open" that, in retrospect, was the worst feature of the private colleges in bygone days. It was their closure, in effect, to all but a certain exceedingly homogeneous type in the social order and their seemingly single-minded desire to maintain, even reinforce, this social type as it went forth to the seats of power and influence. One still sees too much of this type on Wall Street and in the State Department, but happily it is being challenged on a broadening front. Mr. Rabinove could have referred to the unqualified open-admissions practices in a great many of the state universities which were set by law, but the heavy toll taken in freshmen classes demonstrated the unyielding academic standards in such universities, making it possible for teaching and scholarship of high order to exist. The tragic aspect of recent open-admissions programs, as I know Mr. Rabinove agrees, is simply the caving-in of standards and, of course, the heavy expense of so called remedial programs which are largely futile in university contexts. I don't like the chasm of the very rich and the very poor any more than Mr. Rabinove, but continue to think that it is economic growth coupled with equality before the law that is our best hope. Political measures designed to deal with the matter through redistribution not only fail, or achieve reverse consequences; they end up freezing inequality in ways unforeseen or else creating new forms of inequality.

I quite agree with Larry Dalkoff that our modern Leviathan is the result of much more than sustained equalitarianism. In the book from which my article was taken I try to suggest the channels, chiefly military, as I argue, through which centralization of power has become a virtual synonym for democracy. I don't think it quite correct, though, to say that the equalitarianism I attacked is as recent a thing as Mr. Dalkoff suggests, for it would not have attracted the eye of a Tocqueville, a Fitzjames Stephens, or a Henry Adams if there had not been genuine rumblings. Some of the legislation of the New Deal was designed to put a floor under misery, and should be honored accordingly, but some of it, alas, moved in directions which came closer to being redistributive and even confiscatory in implication. I agree that we have a major problem in diminishing resources, and every possible incentive has got to be created to reduce present pressures. But equalitarianism is not the proper route, with its emphasis necessarily upon redistribution that hits the middle class hardest; if Mr. Dalkoff will but concentrate on the implications of a no-growth policy to American society, I am sure he will feel as chilled as I do.

In Translation

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

David Stern ["Translating the Ancients," June] speaks of a translation by Cardinal Newman of the *Iliad,* which was excoriated by Matthew Arnold. In "On Translating Homer: Lecture I" Arnold assailed the translation of the *Iliad* by Professor Francis William Newman, 1805-1897, eccentric and erudite brother of the Cardinal, reputed master of seventeen languages and professor of Latin at University College, London. Arnold disliked F. W. Newman's version because, among other blemishes, it used words of Latin origin "which seem to me quite alien to the simplicity of Homer." Incidentally, F. W. Newman's several changes in religious affiliation never included a conversion to Roman Catholicism. Unlike the Cardinal, he was a liberal in political sympathies and a member of the Jamaica Committee, which was led by John Stuart Mill and had the support of Charles Darwin, Thomas Henry Huxley, and other distinguished Victorians. . . .

Mr. Stern refers to Albert Cook's

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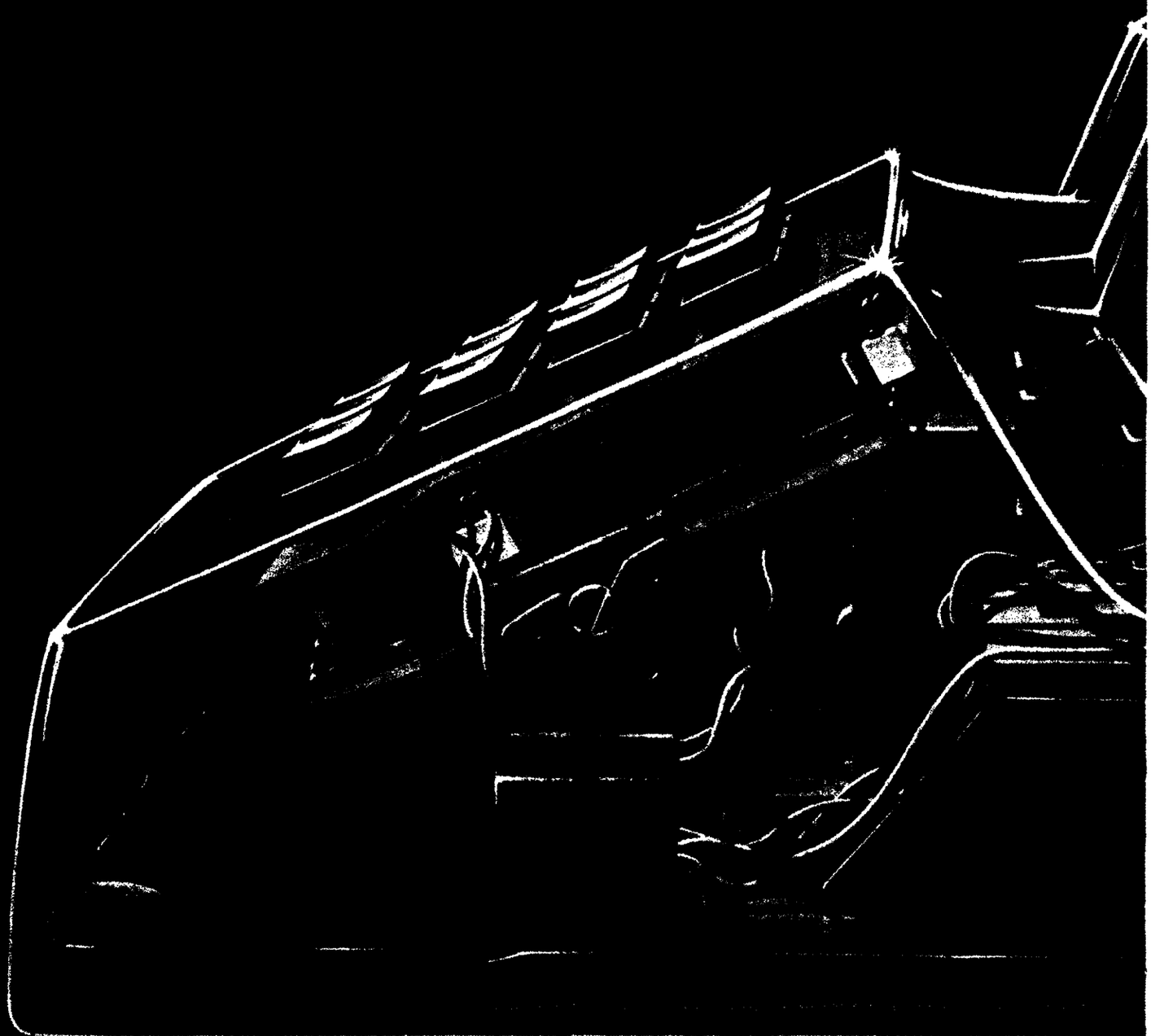

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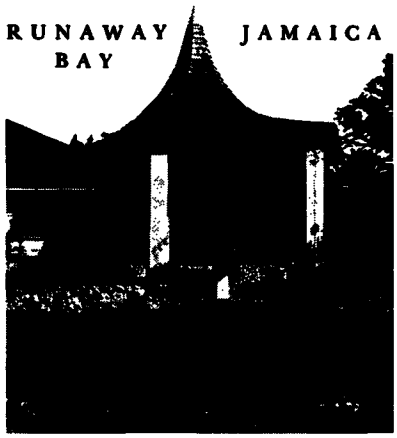

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version of the *Odyssey* but does not discuss it. I like Cook's way with Homer because his treatment is most appealing and has the virtue—to me—of using traditional English spellings of Greek names, e.g., Achilles. I wish Robert Fitzgerald and Richmond Lattimore had avoided Akhilleus (or Achilleus), Hektor, etc.

HARRY W. RUDMAN
Baruch College-CUNY
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

David Stern writes that the New English Bible "was published under the auspices of the Church of England." The statement is correct but misleading. The preface to all editions of NEB makes quite clear that the work represents the joint endeavor of a number of churches besides the English established church; indeed, the initial impetus for this fresh translation of the Christian Bible arose within the Church of Scotland.

WILLIAM D. BOYD
University of Southern Mississippi
Hattiesburg, Mississippi

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Though he does not say so, David Stern seems to see the most important failing of most recent translations of the classics: unlike the originals, they are ugly. But somehow Mr. Stern never gets this fact into focus. He notices in the first lines of Everett Fox's translation of Genesis that the meaningless "now" is a nervous twitch not in the original, and that "Be there light!" is "not English"; but two pages later he praises the very same offenses in the first line of Robert Fitzgerald's *Iliad:* "Anger be now your song. . . ." Although most of Fitzgerald's translation is not as bad as this inexcusable first line, the work is nonetheless a contribution to the growing literature of classical "translationese."

If I translate Mr. Stern's conclusion correctly, he finds merit in the obvious inadequacy of such translations since they send the reader back to the original. They have that effect on me, like Mr. Stern a Harvard graduate student studying classical languages, but they simply convince most readers that the ancients, who are always rendered into translationese, must have written in this manner. The readers conclude either that the ancients had a bad style, or that stilted, choppy free verse is the style approved by the ages, and therefore has to be good.

In fact, Mr. Stern, making the obligatory obeisance to the oral theory, suggests, perhaps inadvertently, that Homer's style is not much good. Until some scholarly liberator masters all the intricacies of the oral theory and carefully proves that most of them apply only to tape recordings from 20th-century Yugoslavia, Mr. Stern cannot be blamed for being intimidated like everyone else. To his credit, he notes that Homer's "magnificence," like the question of how the poems could have been written down, cannot be explained by the oral theory. But this is a problem for the theory, not for Homer: that his poems were written down and that they are magnificent are obvious to those who read Homer in the original. Not so in Fitzgerald's and Lattimore's translations.

I do not understand precisely what Mr. Stern means by "the distance, even the loss, of our past," a cultural malady that apparently affects us only when we try to translate the classics and not when we read them in the original. (The Bible, of course, is a special case.) I do see that creating an ersatz classical literature in translationese, in which an original epic on Jason and Medea has even been composed, lets more of the past be lost than is necessary. This, after all, is what most educated people have to read, if they are to read the classics in bulk. At the least, we should be able to translate into standard, contemporary uncolloquial English, as Fitzgerald almost did in his *Odyssey,* if not in his *Iliad.*

WARREN T. TREADGOLD
Seattle, Washington

DAVID STERN writes:

I stand abashed at having mistaken Cardinal Newman for his brother, Francis William Newman, and thank Harry W. Rudman for correcting my error. William D. Boyd is also correct in pointing out that the Church of England should not alone bear responsibility for the general mediocrity of the NEB; I regret that my original statement was misleading in this respect. Mr. Rudman also owns my thanks for directing me back to Albert Cook's translation, which now seems to me far more admirable than when

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I first looked at it. The use of Latinized spellings (e.g., Achilles) rather than Greek ones (e.g., Akhilleus) seems to be a matter of personal taste; I prefer the latter.

Warren T. Treadgold seems to have mistranslated nearly all my conclusions. The major reason why I never came right out and said that most modern translations of the classics are ugly is because I do not think this is true; it certainly is a false description of the Lattimore or Fitzgerald *Iliads,* the two classical translations I discussed in my article. The difference between the first lines in Everett Fox's translation of Genesis and in Fitzgerald's *Iliad,* and my different attitude toward them, is owing largely to the different claims which each translation makes for itself. Fox's translation claims to be absolutely literal—hence my noting that the "now" was not in the Hebrew. His translation also attempts to push the English syntax into the shape of the Hebrew, a claim which I found somewhat gratuitous in the case of "be there light!" Fitzgerald, in contrast, makes neither claim for his translation. While the "now" in his first line is not in the Greek, it does nevertheless serve a real purpose: insofar as it is spoken by the contemporary "singer" of the epic, it tips the close reader off both to the variations in his version of the song and to its contemporaneity. The syntax of Fitzgerald's first line does indeed resemble the syntax of Fox's; the fact that it begins a sentence which continues through the rest of the first stanza makes it far more bearable. Any reader who, on the basis of Fitzgerald's translation, concludes that "the ancients had a bad style" is guilty of poor logic; he also does not know how to recognize good poetry.

When I wrote that even brilliant translations like Fitzgerald's drive their readers back to the original text, I was referring not to their obvious inadequacy, nor to their translationese, but to their inevitable failure to transpose fully their sources. At this point, however, Mr. Treadgold and I actually differ in our experiences in reading Homer in the original: he seems to find the Homeric world, at least in the Greek, perfectly translucent. As I argued in the article, and as I feel even more

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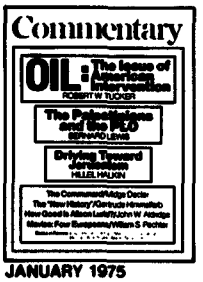

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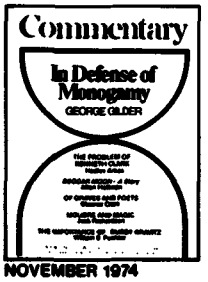

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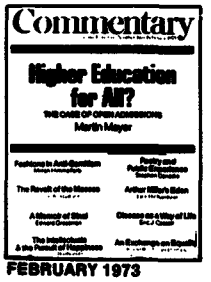

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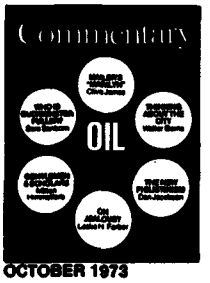

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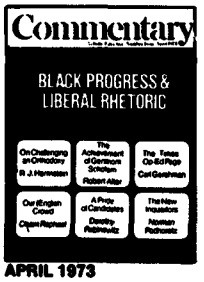

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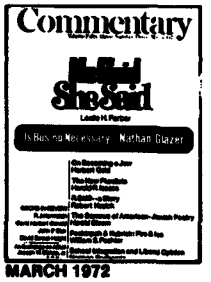

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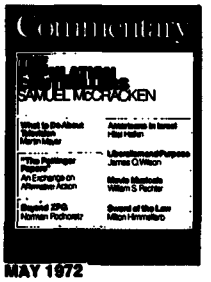

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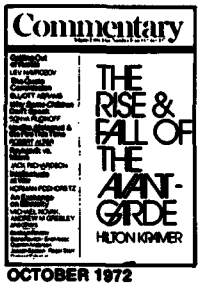

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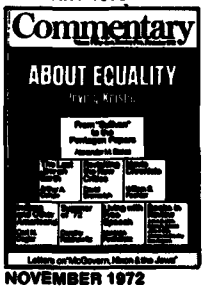

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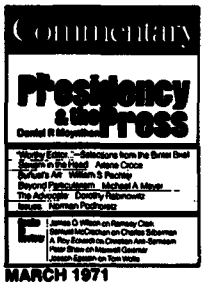

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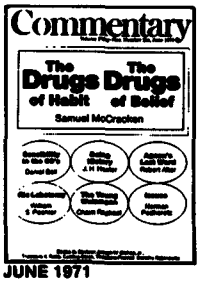

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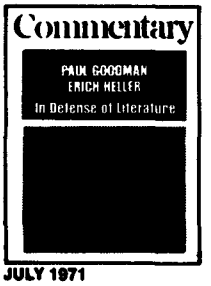

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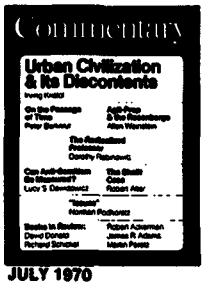

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strongly now, after spending two months rereading the original text, many of Homer's most basic sensibilities—the heroic ideal and his glorification of war, for example—appear absolutely foreign to my own sensibilities. This sense of foreignness is only increased by my awareness of the different conditions in which the original song was composed. (As far as I know, Parry's oral theory is accepted by virtually all classicists today; the reader interested in oral theory, and Mr. Treadgold, might well consult Cedric Whitman's *Homer and the Heroic Tradition* for a fuller discussion.) The consequent distance between the poem and myself does not diminish my appreciation of it. It only makes me work harder to understand it, and envy Mr. Treadgold's ability to think himself effortlessly back into archaic Greece.

The Holocaust

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

While Jacob Katz ["Was the Holocaust Predictable?," May] does not try to give a definitive answer to his title question (and rightly so), he uncharacteristically skirts two other important questions that he raises: what has been and will be the effect of the Holocaust on the Gentile and on the Jew? A cursory review of "modern" Jewish history might provide some interesting clues.

Instead of harking back five hundred years to the Spanish Expulsion, Mr. Katz might have done better to go back another four hundred years to the Crusades which taught the Christian world a devastating lesson—not only would most Jews *not* defend themselves, there would also be no recriminations from the secular powers over mistreatment of the Jews. That historical truism manifested itself repeatedly—in the Inquisition, the Chmielnicki massacres, and the Russian pogroms, finally reaching its culmination in the Holocaust. The Gentile image of the craven Jew received its greatest reinforcement from the pictures of millions of Jews resignedly entering the gas chambers. Had this been the last Gentile image of the Jew, the future would indeed be bleak for world Jewry. Fortunately, it was not. Almost immediately there appeared the image of the assertive, aggressive, independent *sabra*, striving to refashion the stereotype that had contributed to the deaths of millions of his forebears.

As for the impact of the Holocaust on the Jew, Mr. Katz hints at an answer but stops short of a full discussion of it: "Whatever subsequent generations will make of it, for the generation that lived through it the Holocaust can only be characterized as a trauma, a wounding experience beyond the reach of intellectual conceptualization." But how long must we wait for this intellectual response? Again, modern Jewish history provides the clue. From the time of the Second Temple's destruction to the Holocaust, for sheer national trauma nothing matched the Spanish Expulsion. Not only did it mark the collapse of a Golden Age but it also was the *final* expulsion, leaving Western Europe virtually *Judenrein*. Yet the first reactions did not appear until sixty years later with the publication of Solomon ibn Verga's *Shevet Yehuda* and Samuel Usque's *Consolations for the Tribulations of Zion*. The really profound response took another twenty years to evolve, in the guise of Isaac Luria's mystical kabbalism. It would seem that Elie Wiesel is our ibn Verga; the more profound reactions will have to come later. . . .

SAM N. LEHMAN-WILZIG
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I read Jacob Katz's essay with great interest. But I wondered why Mr. Katz didn't mention Hitler's prophetic speech to the German Reichstag (January 30, 1939), in which he announced the coming Holocaust. I had read about the speech in a German biography of Hitler and had located the full text in a collection of Hitler's speeches published in the early 40's by Franz Eher Nachfolger, a Nazi publishing house. But I was curious to find out how the speech had been reported in the American press. The Washington *Post* of January 31, 1939, which I happened to locate first, does have the passage in question:

> Today I will once more be a prophet: If the international Jewish financiers in and outside Europe should succeed in plunging the nations once more into a world war, the result will not be the Bolshevization of the earth, and thus the victory of Jewry, but *the annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe* [emphasis added].

To my great surprise, however, the New York *Times* of the same date, although it devoted two pages to the speech, omitted the statement about the Holocaust. Apparently the *Times* suppressed the statement. It may be that the editors found Hitler's threat both crude and unbelievable, and wanted perhaps to spare their Jewish readers "unnecessary" worry. It makes one wonder, though, how much else has been withheld over the years.

KURT ROSENWALD
Washington, D.C.

JACOB KATZ writes:

I am surprised that Sam N. Lehman-Wilzig praises me for not having given a definitive answer to the question asked in the title of my article, "Was the Holocaust Predictable?" Having said that the Holocaust was an absolute *novum*, I don't think I left a shadow of doubt as to my conviction that it was absolutely unpredictable. Nor do I accept blame for skirting the question of the lasting effects of the Holocaust. Indeed, I explicitly denied the possibility of answering that question. It is one thing to take stock of the present, another to foresee the future. I indicated in my article that the Jewish response to the Holocaust is already in evidence: that response is *not* the "assertive, aggressive, independent *sabra*," for the appearance of this new type of Jew preceded the Holocaust and was the product of the Jewish national movement. It is rather the fact that the commonwealth created by the new type of Jew enjoys the support of the majority of the Jewish people. The question I left unanswered is whether the Jewish response to the Holocaust has been accepted by the world as final, or, rather, whether the antagonism to Jewish existence that culminated in the Holocaust may, taking that event as a clue, reappear in a new form.

I did not mention the "prophetic speech" of Hitler that Kurt Rosenwald refers to, but I had it in mind in saying that even those who did not read *Mein Kampf* had ample opportunity to become aware of Hitler's intentions through his public utterances. The failure of the American press to report the speech is only additional evidence that at the time it was not conceived of as having such sinister significance as it appears to have in retrospect.

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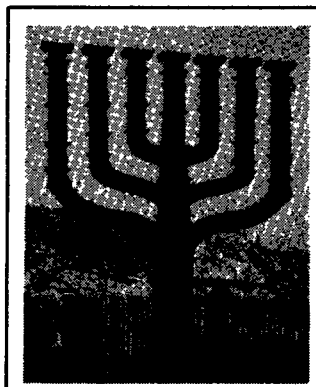

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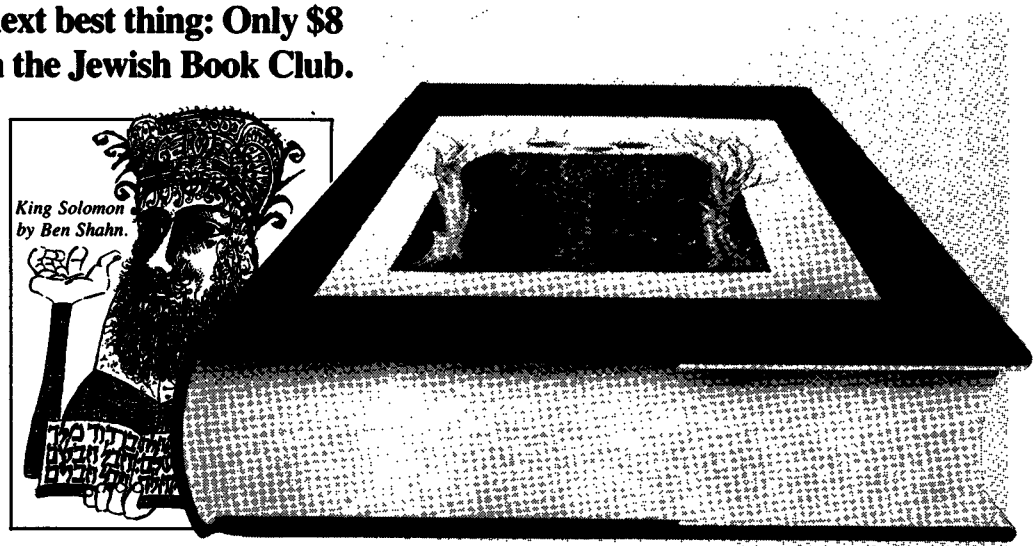

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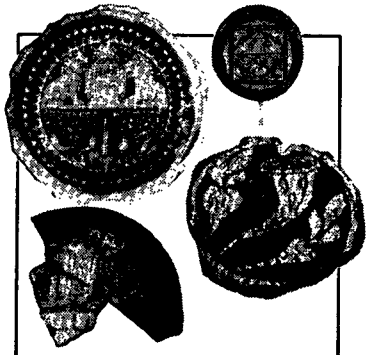

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Misogyny

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In "Heroines and Their Hairdresser" [Movies, May] William S. Pechter says: "But if one sees some of the pathos of the classic Don Juan in *Shampoo*, its twist is that finally George seems less the deceiver being meted out his punishment than the used and discarded plaything of the women he's supposedly been deceiving. Indeed, what distinguishes this version of Don Juan and gives it its bite is *its streak of misogyny*" [emphasis added].

Can you imagine saying of some film that what gives it its bite is its "streak of anti-Semitism"?

ANN SCHLESINGER

New York City

WILLIAM S. PECHTER writes:

No, I don't suppose I would have similarly said a "streak of anti-Semitism," and, if I've thus been caught out in a sexist slip, I'm sorry. I should also say, however, that, while I've no doubt that what's called sexism describes a real and often ugly phenomenon, the attempt by the women's movement to co-opt in the word "sexism" the moral weight and horror of "racism" is, to me, not without its offensive side; and, until someone documents a sexist lynching or pogrom, I think I'll remain a reactionary on this score. Perhaps Ann Schlesinger will accept what seems to me a closer analogy: I can well imagine saying some work gets its bite from its "streak of misanthropy."

Libertarianism

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Milton Himmelfarb's "Liberals & Libertarians" [June] . . . begins as a not too careful contrast of liberals with libertarians—by way of prelude to a consideration of Robert Nozick's *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*—and then degenerates into a tirade upon (among other things) Nozick's putative ingratitude (toward his Jewish ancestry) and an elevation to exemplar of the biblical Phinehas, zealous murderer of consenting adults. (Mr. Himmelfarb's curious retreat shortly thereafter—"We solve the problem of [Amos's] illiberalism [in interfering with consenting adults] by forgetting it"—is dubiously comforting.) One can only wonder whether this book might not have been looked at by someone with a less idiosyncratic ax to grind, the better to enlighten the reader as to what Nozick is actually about in this work.

I say not too careful because "the" libertarian persuasion is by no means so orthodox as Mr. Himmelfarb supposes. Take abortion, for example: libertarians do not "necessarily accept the feminist mistress-of-her-own-body argument" (see David Brudnoy). At bottom, libertarians are defenders of equal rights; and if a fetus—as a human being in the beginning stages of growth—has rights, then the right of a fetus to life is at least as equal as a woman's right to convenience.

But this is hardly the single instance of carelessness to be found in this piece. Aristotle did not, for example, contend that "politics was a branch of ethics," but just the other way around (*Nicomachean Ethics*, I, 2). (Ironically, had Mr. Himmelfarb got this right, it would have served to buttress the larger argument implicit in the piece!) Again, Nozick does not "declare for methodological individualism"; on the contrary, he shows "one way in which the position in the philosophy of the social sciences known as methodological individualism might go wrong." Apparently Mr. Himmelfarb confuses "methodological individualism" with the more general notion of individualism which serves as his major target.

Let me make clear, however, before turning to the matter in this piece which most disturbs me, that I raise the above instances of carelessness not simply to nitpick with Mr. Himmelfarb (in the fashion of the Anglo-American analytical philosophy he belittles) but to suggest that the same lack of care underpins his reading of and, more important, reflections upon the central theses of the book. Consider, for example, Mr. Himmelfarb's interpretation of Nozick's contention that our being in part a "social product" "does not create in us a general floating debt which the current society can collect and use as it will." Now the thrust of that statement is as clear as a general (and concise) statement about that sort of subject can be: Nozick is anxious to challenge the *"carte blanche"* view of the individual's indebtedness to his society. The statement does *not*, however, lend itself to the interpretation Mr. Himmelfarb gives it: "In effect, Nozick asks his benefactors, the society and tradition to which he admits he is indebted, 'But what have you done for me lately?' " That may indeed be "the ingrate's question"; but only the sloppiest of readings can make of it Nozick's question. Yet Mr. Himmelfarb only compounds his error when he cites as "self-refutation" an altogether different passage in the book: "We should be apprehensive about any principle that would condemn morally the very sort of process that brought us to be. . . ." To argue, as in the first instance, that from a certain general historical process a "floating duty" redeemable "at will" does not arise is *not* to "condemn morally" that process. Processes may or may not generate various duties; but if they do not they are not thereby "condemned morally" (whatever that may mean). In the latter passage Nozick is simply cautioning against reading morality back into a morally neutral process, much as in the first passage he is cautioning against reading *more* morality into a process than is to be found there.

Mr. Himmelfarb seems willing, in short, to do anything but argue closely with Nozick. He is content, instead, with broadsides: whereas Nozick shows, over almost fifty tightly argued pages, that certain important aspects of John Rawls's thesis are tautological, Mr. Himmelfarb is satisfied to dismiss Nozick's entire book—in a single sentence, without argument—as "equally tautological"! (It is not enough to add "his individualist premises compelling his conclusions" or to have remarked that Nozick "conceals from himself that groups are real"—he does not. . . .)

Those who will not reason through moral issues, as is well known, are to be found most deferring to authority of one sort or another. And Mr. Himmelfarb is no exception. Having chided Nozick for being "demonstratively not non-Jewish," Mr. Himmelfarb launches into a lengthy defense of the demonstratively non-individualistic ethics enshrined in the tradition of the Jewish theocracy. (It is a commonplace that theocracies are non-individualistic, that the distinctions of public and private, legal and moral, duty and virtue fit uncomfortably at best within the divine order.) Now no one will argue that much—and the

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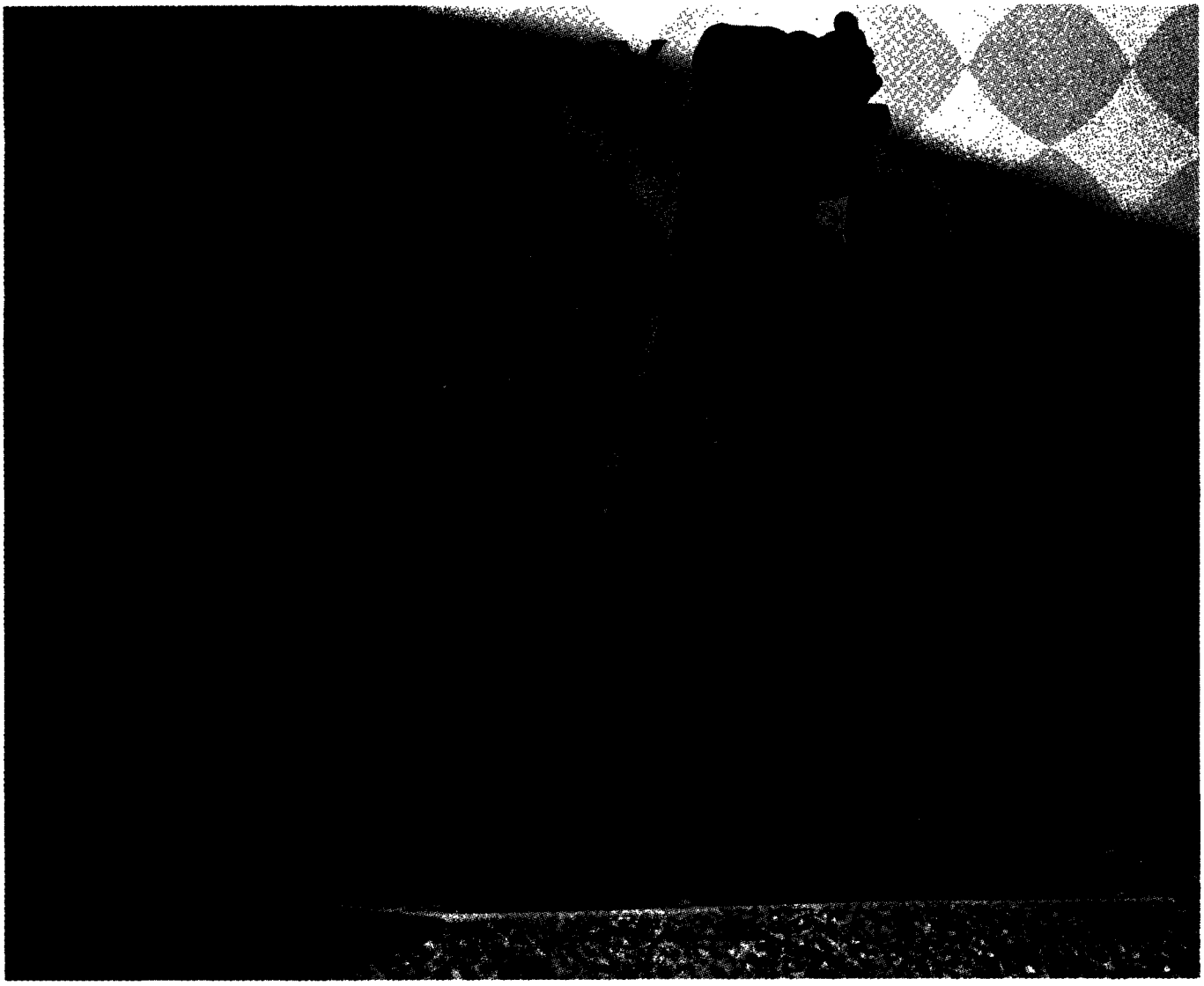

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more important parts—of that tradition can be justified rationally (that rational and traditional ethics come together on most important points is entirely ignored by Mr. Himmelfarb). But here precisely is the point: there is all the difference in the world between citing the historical (or traditional or authoritarian) *sources* of an ethical code and a rational *justification* of that code. Tradition *per se* sets out no justification whatever. Slavery (not the voluntary servitude of which Nozick speaks) is a Western tradition of long standing, let us remember. And every tyrant who ever ruled has at one time or another "justified" his actions by reference to tradition.

Difficulties with a tradition-based ethics will arise, of course, only when it occurs to someone—some individual, some "outsider," as Mr. Himmelfarb would have it—to question, either literally or by deed, the reasons behind (the justification of) a particular dictum. At that point, citing authority will not do—it is circular. And that point was reached long ago in the history of the West (if indeed it ever was not the case)—thus our pluralistic world, and thus the need for a searching, rationally based ethics. But I expect this will all be lost on those who would argue that we have, most of us, strayed (and thus the pluralistic world is one grand error), or on those for whom ethics *just means* conformity to God's will (as they understand it). Armed with such certitude, and with a code that reaches to every corner of our being, intolerance is righteousness, and liberty is the freedom to do what is required. Virtue, for these, is coextensive with obedience.

The pity is that Mr. Himmelfarb should have to be reminded of all this. It is not a little curious, in fact, to find in his final paragraph an apparent call to pluralist democracy. Is this a late irony? Or an attempt to set straight an uncomfortable drift?

ROGER PILON
Department of Philosophy
University of Chicago
Chicago, Illinois

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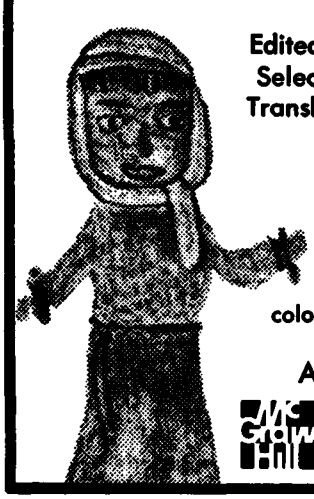

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TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

While I am grateful that Milton Himmelfarb takes notice of libertarianism, there are a few points that deserve comment.

Libertarians do not, as Mr. Himmelfarb implies, believe that you should "do whatever you want." Rather, they hold that one *may* "do whatever one wants with one's *own property, and with no one else's unless they give consent.*" Libertarians hold that one owns one's person, one's labor, and what one obtains in voluntary exchange. The libertarian ideology is derived from these premises. (I would recommend Murray Rothbard's *For A New Liberty,* rather than Robert Nozick's book, to anyone who wants an exposition of libertarian theories.) Thus you may kill yourself, or ask someone else to do it for you, but to force someone else to kill you is coercion, as Mr. Himmelfarb intuits. Thus you may pollute your neighbors' air and water only if they permit it; if they do not, it is coercion. . . . Whether one *should* do any of these things is another matter entirely.

Which raises the question of coercion. The good Jew, says Mr. Himmelfarb, should not submit to plastic surgery, or blaspheme, or fornicate, or in general break any of the Commandments. But what of the Gentile? Would Mr. Himmelfarb deny him plastic surgery because it is forbidden to the Jew? I certainly hope not. So why outlaw, for example, prostitution, on these grounds? Libertarianism does not argue that prostitution, sadism, suicide, and the like are desirable. (I am one libertarian who doesn't admire any of these things.) But the libertarian does say that since one may eschew them whether or not anyone else does, one may not coercively prevent others from practicing them. Can't we leave the enforcement of the divine law to the Divinity?

Mr. Himmelfarb is correct when he says that libertarianism is derived from individualist premises. If each person does not own his own life and property, who does? If we say the state, we can justify the totalism of, say, Hitler. If we say the church, we can justify the Spain of the Inquisition. Can the Jew afford *not* to uphold individual freedom?

I am no theologian, nor even a theist, but I see no reason why one cannot be both a good Jew and a libertarian. The problem is

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whether or not one can be an observant Jew (or Catholic or Unitarian) by obeying God's commandments without compelling others to do the same. I think one can. . . .

WILLIAM F. BIRMINGHAM
Isla Vista, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

As an observant Jew and a political libertarian, I feel I must comment on Milton Himmelfarb's article. . . .

The libertarian credo could well be the Jewish Golden Rule—"Whatever is hateful unto thee, do it not unto thy fellow," or "Do *not* do unto others what you would *not* have others do to you."

Libertarianism is a belief in a society which is based on free enterprise and private property; in which total freedom exists to the extent that it does not interfere with someone else's right to life or property; and in which force would be used only as a defense against those who initiated it. The crucial axiom is that no man or group of men have a right to aggress against the person or property of anyone else. . . .

According to the Jews, God's law is universal: Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is *one*. This same totality and universality can be seen in the philosophical aspect of libertarianism; almost all of its concepts are non-contradictory. No use of force except to defend one's life and property. The right to live one's life as Jew, Catholic, or atheist.

My choice to live as an Orthodox Jew is because of my understanding of the preciousness of life and the uniqueness of every individual. To have one complete day of rest a week and to be able to appreciate more fully afterward the scientific and industrial wonders of the modern world enhances my love of life. Because I have achieved peace of mind from living in this manner, should I force anyone else to do it? The majority of Jews do not observe the basic tenets of their religion. Should they be *forced* to? Should we be *forced* to give to the poor? As Mr. Himmelfarb states, as a Jew it is my "duty" to give (and I do). Should I be punished if I do not? It is only by setting an impeccable example that Jews can prove themselves more moral than the society they live in. And only when *laws* and *rules* reflect the attitudes and mores of all the people, not just the whims of politicians and vocal pressure groups, will the public at large accept them as valid.

With the liberals' intense desire to benefit the "public good," it is always the *individual* good that is ignored. It is individuality that the state wants to quash. It is in the name of the "good" that the state forces us to be "charitable" to those out of work by means of (voluntary?) taxation enabling government to subdue two groups at the same time (the poor and the middle class). . . . Don't we all know that the state is benevolent? It could not possibly be that welfare payments really mean votes for politicians. It could not possibly be that politicians are influenced . . . by all types of militant and powerful groups rather than by consumers or the open market. This is the heritage liberals have left us. Politicians and bureaucrats—good or bad—control our lives. How much say do the voters really have? The bureaucrats are a permanent part of the structure and remain that way until retirement (on fat pensions) or death. As for the politicians, how can the public judge what they do? It would take the average person all his waking hours just to determine which politician voted for which bill. And then when the bill is passed, can one really determine its effect? . . .

Mr. Himmelfarb states: "An either/or choice between individual and society is like the choice between free will and determination. The Jewish answer is to refuse the choice." Yet who has a greater communal spirit than the Jews and at the same time the individuality to produce eleven opinions for every ten people? It is the philosophical "glue" that holds us together. The same can be said for libertarians. They understand that just as self-esteem is a requirement for the psychological well-being of a rational individual, so too is rational interaction among individuals a necessity for the proper functioning of a moral society.

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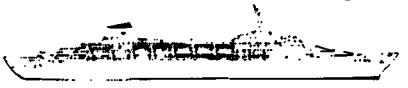

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Jewish names appear in the libertarian movement. It is in the pursuit of something better for society that Jewish compassion and idealism takes hold. It was on the same basis that many Jews were misguidedly drawn to the Communist movement in its early days, not realizing that the consequences of advocating *any* means to achieve the desired end would result in having *only* means and no end.

I am neither a philosopher nor an economist, but I consider my Jewishness and my sensitivity to the "plight of the poor" and the working class to be more thoughtful than the average person's. It is in the name of the best within us that I must take a stand against all the distortions that Mr. Himmelfarb has presented. . . .

THEODORE JACOBS
Fair Lawn, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Milton Himmelfarb asserts that libertarianism "seeks to break the chains of tradition and traditional community." Insofar as these really are chains—restraints imposed without the individual's consent—there is some truth to the charge. It is also true of specific individuals who may be associated with the libertarian viewpoint. But there is no inherent contradiction between the libertarian presumption in favor of maximizing the scope of individual choice, and the idea that tranquil social relations require internalized constraints on individual behavior. If such mores are too restrictive, which is to say that the community is intolerant, a favorite libertarian solution is simply to leave that community. A related objection to huge nation-states is that they commonly make escape almost impossible, as the case of Jews in Russia makes quite clear.

Many libertarians have a profound sense of tradition, and are fond of tracing the historic roots of individualism. Other libertarians have an equally genuine sense of community. This usually takes the form of strengthening one's immediate neighborhood, though the libertarian journal *Reason* carries articles reflecting allegiance to various groups—including blacks, American Indians, homosexuals, and feminists.

Mr. Himmelfarb just objects that Nozick has embraced the libertarian tradition, and the libertarian view of voluntary community, rather than certain aspects of Judaism. In a libertarian community, one could still persuade people that they have a moral duty to be charitable, or that they should not eat certain foods, but it would not be possible to compel such virtue through the threat of imprisonment. Morality without choice is a contradiction.

Mr. Himmelfarb has a great deal of fun stereotyping, caricaturing, ridiculing, and thoroughly misunderstanding the libertarian position. Libertarians, we are told, must necessarily favor abortion and pollution, and must deny that groups are real. Judaism, on the other hand, is represented as the position that there can be no society, no culture, without a state. How fortunate we are that we need not choose between two such foolish positions, since neither one exists outside the critic's mind.

ALAN REYNOLDS
National Review
New York City

MILTON HIMMELFARB writes:

I can still be disappointed when people of intellect and learning, who for all I know may not agree with Hume that reason ought to be the slave of the passions, nevertheless provide evidence that he was right in holding that reason *is* the slave of the passions. Once a letter in these pages was angry with me for having written that someone had been convicted of conspiracy to murder, when in fact I had written "indicted." (He fled the country before he could be tried.) The writer of the letter knew how to read, he was a professor of English. Passion had blinded him. Now it is the turn of a teacher of philosophy to be capable of misreading and misunderstanding things hardly more abstruse.

Mr. Pilon says I "chided Nozick for being 'demonstratively not non-Jewish.'" For Mr. Pilon I must be a rather fundamentalist Jew. Otherwise he would scarcely feel it necessary to favor me with a lesson, thoughtfully kept simple, about the distinction between philosophical and traditional or revealed ethics. Would a Jew like me chide another Jew for *not* being, whether demonstratively or undemonstratively, non-Jewish?

I do not blush, says Mr. Pilon, to hold up as an example "the biblical Phinehas, zealous murderer of consenting adults." Why then do I speak of Amos's illiberalism in interfering with consenting adults? Mr. Pilon says that is only a "curious retreat" on my part. Trained in reading texts more demanding than mine, ordinarily he would ask himself whether what I said about Amos should not affect his interpretation of what I said about Phinehas. He would ask himself whether there was not, perhaps, a certain distance or even irony in my paraphrase of those verses in Numbers and whether a traditionalist or Phinehasite would call Amos's sinners, as I did, devotees of the syncretistic, pre-prophetic Israelite folk religion. That is how Mr. Pilon would proceed ordinarily. With reason enslaved to the passions, he satisfies himself readily that I am only engaged in a curious retreat.

In his zeal—for zeal did not come to an end with Phinehas—he represents me not only as chiding Nozick for demonstrative Jewishness but also, contradictorily, as mouthing a "tirade upon . . . Nozick's putative ingratitude (toward his Jewish ancestry)." "Tirade" is a mere tirade. I did not fault Nozick for not being unquestioningly obedient to the communitarian teachings of the Bible and the Rabbis. I asked how a Jew who goes out of his way to demonstrate respect for Jewish tradition can, with no sign of strain or struggle, teach an individualism totally at odds with that tradition. Why was it all so smooth and easy, *for him?* Nozick invites the question. Mr. Pilon resents it.

Or again, because I quote an analytical philosopher to the effect that "the Anglo-Americans [are] convinced that the Europeans are full of hot air, and the Europeans that the Anglo-Americans are trivial," Mr. Pilon says I belittle Anglo-American analytical philosophy. Independently, in the *Public Interest* for Summer 1975, Marc F. Plattner now refers to "a Continental tradition . . . contemptuous of—and regarded with contempt by—the dominant Anglo-American philosophic school." Who will deny it? As if that were not enough, in the very sentence in which Mr. Pilon accuses me of belittling analytical philosophy, he says that nitpicking is the fashion of that philosophy.

Thinking to defend Nozick the philosopher, Mr. Pilon makes excuses for the *philosophe*. The philosopher Nozick's language, expository and analytical, is precise. The *philosophe* Nozick's language is appropriate to another genre entirely, the persuasive or forensic.

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Take "general floating debt which the current society can collect and use as it will." Would Nozick acknowledge fixed debt? If the debt is not payable on demand, what about payment when notes fall due? Such questions are out of place. Nozick is not making philosophical or analytical distinctions, but using a rhetorical device to sneer at taking seriously the individual's indebtedness or obligation to the historical society and the tradition which have endowed him with his "social product" self. It is analytical philosophers who tell us we can usefully dispute only such arguments as are falsifiable—which is to say, refutable. Who can refute a sneer?

My treatment of Nozick's book, says Mr. Pilon, is idiosyncratic. To be idiosyncratic is to be nonconformist, individualistic. Why should a defender of individualism choose that as a term of reproach? And why should he imply that only from me would anyone who read my piece be likely to learn about Nozick? It is as if Mr. Pilon were making a plea for some obscure tract, of which a pitifully few copies had dropped unheralded from the press. In reality he is talking about a book which, like Rawls's, has won a National Book Award and has had respectful, not to say adulatory, reviews in the leading journals, British as well as American. While it is not surprising that an intellectual class which is egalitarian and socialist or welfare-liberal should have been delighted with Rawls, it may seem surprising that the same class should now be almost as delighted with the laissez-faire libertarian Nozick. But that is by the way. It is enough that in such circumstances an idiosyncratic treatment may have its uses.

More systematically than I, Marc F. Plattner has revealed the congruence between Rawls's hypertrophic egalitarianism and Nozick's hypertrophic libertarianism. In the *American Political Science Review* for June 1975, which features a half-dozen critiques of Rawls, Vernon Van Dyke of Iowa reproves him for an atomistic individualism that ignores ethnic and religious interest and feeling. No doubt a future critique in the same *Review* will find Nozick similarly deficient.

I could go on but I will end my reply to Mr. Pilon here, except for a final word about Aristotle. I thank Mr. Pilon for volunteering to strengthen my case. Formally he is right. Only a few lines before the conclusion of the *Nichomachean Ethics* Aristotle appears to equate political science with "that philosophy which is concerned with human matters." But the *Politics* properly so-called follows and depends upon the books about ethics. Dealing with the polis, it is emphatic that the end of the polis is not so much to enable the citizens to live as to enable them to live well or rightly. What to live well or rightly means is a question of ethics.

William F. Birmingham thinks he is making a brief for libertarianism. Insofar as I find it cogent, it is a brief for liberalism and pluralist democracy, which, as I cited Ernst Fraenkel citing Pascal, sets unity and multiplicity in balanced tension with each other, avoiding the tyranny of the first and the confusion of the second. Even if—which is doubtful—I allowed the Jewish legal presumption against cosmetic surgery, as expounded by J. David Bleich, to decide for me in a personal or family problem, I would not allow it to decide my vote in a public referendum. Prudence, though not a theoretical virtue, is a practical or political one. Prudence requires a citizen to tolerate in a pluralist polity things he will not tolerate in home or congregation when the social or political cost of making them illegal is too high. Thus, it was not prudent of the temperance people to prohibit alcohol. But, whether I liked or disliked fundamentalist Hinduism, would prudence require me to vote for tolerating the immolation of widows?

I expressed uneasiness over libertarian insouciance about blackmail, heroin, sadism, voluntary servitude, and aiding and abetting suicide. Mr. Birmingham prefers to talk about Hitler and Torquemada.

Not much fonder than Theodore Jacobs of bureaucracy and statism, I am struck by his untroubled reconciliation of fidelity to Jewish tradition with devotion to the irreconcilable cause of libertarian individualism.

Finally, Alan Reynolds. "No more tradition's chains shall bind us" is, as I said, radicalism's promise—the English for the original in the "Internationale" which exhorts us to wipe clean the slate of the past. And it is not when states are large that they do not allow people to leave, it is when they are totalitarian. America is a large state and Americans may emigrate freely, Albania is a small state and Albanians may not emigrate freely.

Even in pre-modern times no Jewish thinker would have suggested that Gentiles should be forbidden to eat food that was not kosher. But no Jewish thinker would have thought any society legitimate in which what Mr. Reynolds calls charity but what the Bible calls not standing by the blood of your neighbor was regarded as a private and optional virtue, somewhat on the order of supererogatory prayer. In Jewish thought such an idea, let alone such a practice, is held to be "the quality of Sodom." No need to speak of amused non-interference with sadism, and so on—over which Mr. Reynolds, like the writers of the other letters, passes in silence.

Accusing me of caricaturing the libertarians' position, he caricatures mine. I did not say that libertarians must favor abortion and pollution. I said they must favor a woman's absolute discretion about abortion. I said that, unlike liberals, libertarians are not intense about pollution.

How could anyone think I represent Judaism as teaching that without a state there can be neither society nor culture? For two thousand years there was no Jewish state, but there was a Jewish society and there was a Jewish culture. What I said is that both Jewish and Greek history show the decisive influence of having or not having a state—a more than minimal state—upon culture and thought.

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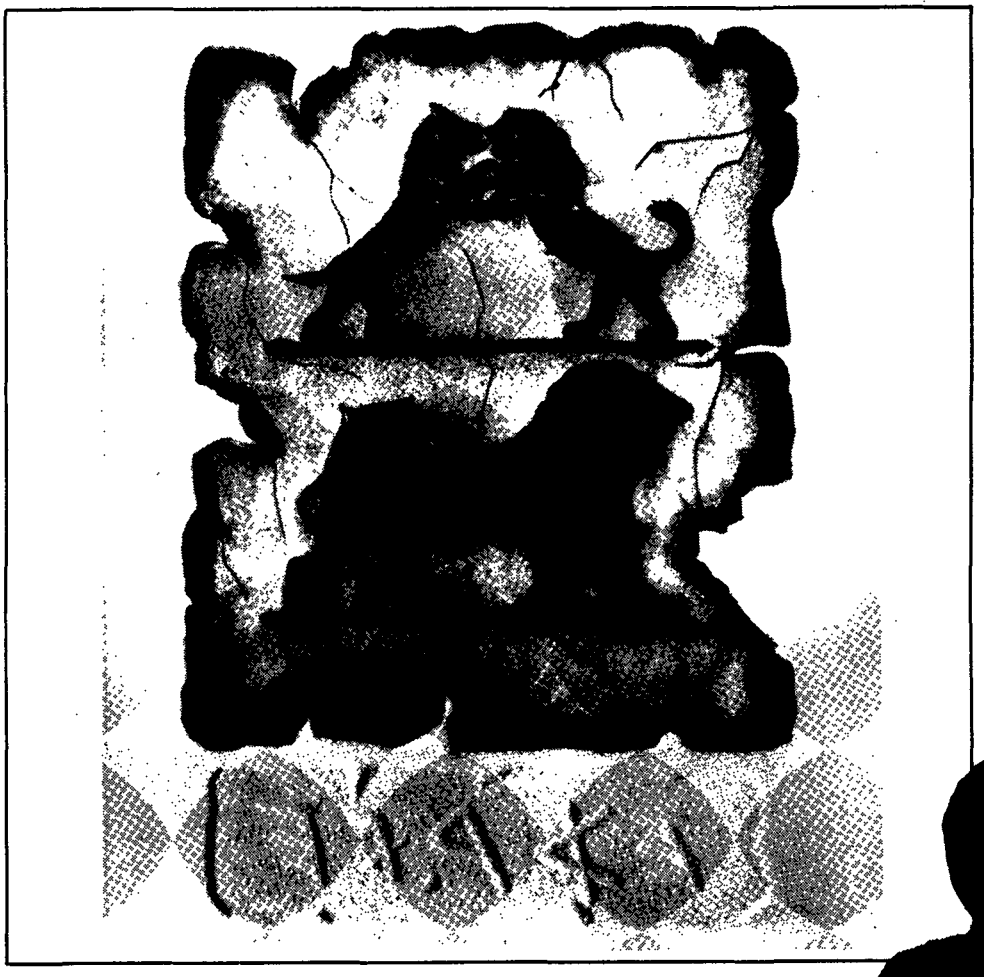

A sixth-generation Israeli whose family emigrated from Portugal to Algiers in 1490 and then to Palestine in 1838, Mrs. Rotholz (nee Chélouche) is steeped in the culture and tradition of Israel, both ancient and modern. She studied in Haifa and Beirut, as well as at the Pratt Graphic Art Center and Brooklyn Museum Art School in the United States.

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Conspiracy Fever

Jacob Cohen

How can one explain the extraordinary degree of political distrust and, beyond that, the pervasive taste for mystery and conspiracy which is everywhere so conspicuous in America today? Old conspiracy theories (concerning Alger Hiss, the Rosenbergs, and the assassination of President Kennedy) are out of the dustbin and enjoying new life; there seem to be more than enough readers for five different treatments of that laughable non-mystery, the Bermuda Triangle; the flying-saucer faithful are riding high; and a new species of high-class monster movie (*The Conversation, Chinatown, Night Moves, The Parallax View*) ends with the monster alive and still menacing. The message in these movies seems to be that we are surrounded by unconquerably complex and sinister forces; withdrawal and resignation are offered as appropriate responses.

The customary explanation is that recent revelations concerning Watergate, Vietnam, the CIA and FBI, *et al.*, have caused and perhaps justify the present mood of distrust and that truthfulness and rectitude on high will one day dispel it. However, close examination of the cultural scene reveals that this is only part of the explanation and perhaps not the most important part. I believe we are dealing with habits of mind in the very center of our life and times which positively revel in mystification, which do not wish to know the truth and perhaps could not recognize it if they saw it.

Let me illustrate by reciting a few representative tales from our times. They concern certain facts in dispute with regard to the assassination of President Kennedy, though I shall also want to refer in passing to aspects of the Rosenberg and Hiss cases. I offer them not to dispose of the mystery which attaches to these cases (to me there is no mystery, the truth of all three matters being quite clear) but as an example of how powerful feelings of distrust arise and breed upon themselves, powerfully resisting any efforts to dispel them.

JACOB COHEN teaches in the Department of American Studies at Brandeis. He is currently completing a book, *The Limits of Distrust*, on allegations of government conspiracy in connection with the Lincoln assassination, the Mooney-Billings case, Alger Hiss, the Rosenbergs, and the assassinations of the 60's.

I

As ALL assassination buffs know, one of the first and most pivotal disputes to arise out of the Warren Commission Report concerned the exact location of the small, neat wound of entry in President Kennedy's back and whether or not that wound could be connected to another small, neat wound in the President's throat. The Commission, following the autopsy report, placed the back wound quite high up, in the musculature between the shoulder and neck, and argued that that "single bullet," the famous exhibit 399, then exited from Kennedy's throat and went on to hit Governor Connally, causing all of his five separate wounds. All students of the assassination, pro and con the Report, agree that this sequence and every one of its constituent details are indispensable to the conclusion that there was a single assassin.

Now, it may be thought that it would be the easiest thing in the world to establish the location of a small, neat wound in the back and the evidence of its passage through the body toward the throat, especially since photographs and X-rays were taken of the President the night of the assassination, before and during the autopsy examination. Either the wound was here or it was there; there is only one truth in the matter. Either it left signs of its passage through the body, or it did not. If things happened otherwise, there must be other signs pointing to another singular reality.

However, if reality is always and ever singular, the evidence pointing to that reality is often ambiguous, especially evidence arising out of human observation. There is no scandal in this if we remember that reality is one, even if the evidence of it is sometimes murky. As it happens, several signs pointed to the possibility of a wound considerably lower in the back, one, therefore, unconnected with the throat wound. Beginning in 1965, critics of the Warren Report began to point out that the holes in the President's shirt and jacket seemed to align with a considerably lower back hit (though the clothing may have hunched up his neck as he waved to the crowd). They pointed to a small hole drawn on a silhouette by one of the doctors during the autopsy

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examination (exhibit 397) which seems to place the wound quite far down (though precise measurements recorded in the margin of the same document point to the higher location). Then there were the FBI documents which revealed that for more than a month after the shooting the FBI (or, more precisely, the authors of the documents) worked on the assumption that the bullet which hit the President in the back had only entered a short distance and then somehow worked itself out; in other words, that it was unconnected to the throat wound. At this point, critics would remind readers and listeners that the doctors who treated the President in Dallas, immediately after the shooting, at first called the small, neat wound in his throat an entry wound, not a wound of exit. Finally, and perhaps most provocative, it became clear early in 1966 that the X-rays and photographs taken of the President the night of the assassination, which could have cleared up the dispute in a moment, were never seen by the Commission or its staff, who were refused access to them, never seen by the autopsy doctors after the night of the assassination, and were unavailable to independent investigators (at the behest of the Kennedy family which retained them).[1]

What a fever these ambiguities raised, suggesting as they did not only the possibility of a second assassin but deeper, darker perfidies. Consider: no innocent error could have led the autopsy doctors to be off by inches in locating a back wound. Further, if the bullet did not pass through the body and exit from the throat, then the internal evidence of that passage cited by the autopsy doctors—a bruise on the dome of the right parietal pleura, an adjacent bruise at the upper end of the right lung, both of them in line with a passage from back to throat wound—was fabricated. The tiny traces of air in the tissues along the bullet track, allegedly visible in the X-rays, are not there. The doctors must have lied. And they must also have covered up the damage done by the bullet which caused the indubitable throat wound (was it a frontal hit, as Mark Lane suggests?). Bullets do not tear into a neck leaving no internal trace or ultimate point of exit.[2] The point cannot be overstressed: the facts in precise dispute in this matter were not at all subtle. The possibility of simple error on the part of the autopsy doctors is ruled out.

If the doctors lied and covered up, they probably began to do so the weekend of the assassination when the autopsy report was completed and submitted (and before it was clear what lies needed to be told!). That means they were told to lie, and those who told them were told to tell them. When one pieces together methodically the effort which would be necessary to plug all possible leaks likely in the telling of a lie of this magnitude, the scope of the necessary conspiracy is staggering (far larger, I might say, than anything revealed about Watergate). Were the morticians at the Lawson Funeral Home checked out to make sure that they did not spill the beans about a lower back wound? Were all the thirty or so people who were in and out of the autopsy room and might have heard a discussion of wounds radically different from those reported by the autopsy doctors, checked out as well? Why are all those implicated or who have knowledge of the conspiracy remaining silent? From fear, no doubt. What do they have to fear? What do we all have to fear? Thus a single, unresolved question of fact was capable of generating nightmares.

Not every writer at the time—I speak now of 1966-68—drew out the full conspiratorial implications of the material, though those implications were inescapable. Thus in a work like Edward Jay Epstein's *Inquest* (1966), which is widely respected for its moderate tone, nearly all the suspense is supplied by his discussion of anomalies arising out of the evidence concerning the back and throat wound, but he himself does not charge a massive conspiracy. Other writers were not so cautious. Books, articles, records, lectures came forth in profusion. The autopsy drawing, the FBI reports, the measurements of the holes in the shirt and jacket were replicated a millionfold. There was endless talk on the talk shows, gossip generating gossip. Simultaneously, there came an outcry for clarification and resolution (on to the X-rays and photographs!) so that the burden of the ambiguity and its dreadful implications might be lifted. And when the outcry was not heeded, for almost three years, until 1968, that was further provocation to the suspicious. At that time an immense emotional history was forged, constituted by people's accurate memory of their own terror, anxiety, anger, doubt, or worry (temperaments vary) when they contemplated the arguments and behavior of the critics of the Warren Report, and maintained by the natural human propensity to believe that the external provocation of our deepest emotions is not a chimera.

One would think that such tension would welcome the relief of decisive resolution. And if ever a question of fact has been resolved it is this one. Late in 1966, the Kennedy family relinquished the autopsy materials to the National Archives, placing strict restrictions on access to them. In February 1968, a panel

[1]The present writer was one of the first to point out that the X-rays and photographs were missing, and the first to establish that the Kennedy family was responsible. A benign explanation of their behavior is offered in "The Vital Documents," *Nation*, July 3, 1966.

[2]Not even the most ingenious of the critics of the Warren Report has suggested that a bullet entering the throat could be connected with the back wound. The angles make it impossible, and, in any case, an analysis of the fabric of shirt and jacket make it certain that the President was struck from behind.

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of four prominent physicians, three forensic pathologists, and a radiologist, each nominated by a prominent person outside of government,[3] was convened by Attorney General Ramsey Clark to review that material and the panel unanimously confirmed every conclusion of the autopsy including the location of the back wound and the evidence of its passage to the throat. They found evidence of no other wounds except those which could have been caused by a gunman above and behind the President. Four years later two other forensic pathologists examined the material, including Dr. Cyril Wecht, a professor at the Duquesne University School of Law and chief medical examiner of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania,[4] who had been and remains one of the major critics of the single-assassin theory. We shall want to consider Dr. Wecht's species of respectable fanaticism a little later, but it should be understood that with regard to the question of the back wound and its relation to the throat, he confirmed the Commission's findings of three years before, refuting some of his own earlier speculations into the bargain.[5]

Of course, all these doctors could be lying, ordered to, afraid not to, even Wecht, who cunningly would continue to criticize the single-assassin theory on other grounds, to maintain credibility. Or perhaps the X-rays and photographs produced for these distinguished doctors are all fake, the real materials having been destroyed or hidden, though the job of fabrication and erasure necessary for that is so staggeringly complex,[6] the number of accomplices (all silent) so numerous, that a sane and serious person soon ceases dallying with the possibility. Therefore one must simply conclude that the holes in the jacket and shirt, the autopsy drawing, the testimony of the Dallas doctors concerning a possible frontal hit, the FBI summary of autopsy findings, all point to exactly nothing except everyday and most unthreatening human errors or coincidences. After the definitive reexamination of the autopsy material, they have interest only as psychological episodes with no essential connection to the truth of the assassination. They are like a prankster's fins in the water, not a shark at all; a mirage caused by the morning light, not a flying saucer;[7] an unpleasant, nonconforming hag, but not a witch who flies on a broomstick, eats children, and copulates with the devil. Anyone caring about the truth of the assassination would need to erase the memory of the great public perturbation caused by these fantasies as he moves on to other areas in dispute.

II

WHAT of those areas? Are they so majestically disposed of? I shall touch only the familiar bases. Consider the well-known concerns raised by frames 313-317 of the Zapruder film, the pivotal material in the controversy over the President's head wound. By now millions have seen the ghastly episode played and replayed on television and in movie theaters; seen the head and body snap sharply to the left within a third of a second; seen the splay of brain matter backward out of the open-top car. How, the critics ask, could a hit from behind and above have caused this violent motion to the left and backward? Isn't a hit from the front-right (at last, the grassy knoll) more likely, especially since many people thought the shots came from there and photographs indicate the presence of a gun or gunman?

Again, the autopsy findings should have silenced this line of speculation from the beginning, and if the autopsy doctors were not to be trusted, those who subsequently examined the autopsy materials, including the skeptical Dr. Wecht, must be. As with the back and throat wound, the point in dispute involves no subtle distinctions which could give rise to honest differences of expert opinion. The autopsy doctors found a small wound of entry above the hairline in the back of the skull and a large wound of exit in the right rear portion of the President's head. All the fracturing described was of a wound sprung open from within. The critics, on the other hand, posit a direct hit from the right-front capable of driving the head and body violently leftward and backward, which would have produced results almost directly opposite to those reported by the autopsy team. It is simply impossible that the many X-rays and photographs of the body would fail to show evidences of such a decisive hit. This is why so many of the critics, like Professor Josiah Thompson of Haverford and Dr. Wecht, eagerly awaited the availability of the X-rays and photographs, and

[3] William H. Carnes, M.D., professor of Pathology at the University of Utah, nominated by the President of Stanford University; Russel S. Fisher, M.D., professor of Forensic Pathology, University of Maryland, nominated by the President of the College of American Pathologists; Russel H. Morgan, M.D., professor of Radiology, The Johns Hopkins University, nominated by the President of The Johns Hopkins University; Alan R. Moritz, M.D., professor of Pathology, Case Western Reserve University, nominated by the President of Michigan State.

[4] The other doctor was Dr. John K. Lattimer of Columbia, whose summary of the medical evidence provides the most brilliant confirmation of the autopsy findings in the written literature. See "Further Information About the Autopsy of President John F. Kennedy," *The Forensic Science Gazette*, September 1973, pp. 3-9. Dr. E. Forrest Chapman of Michigan also reviewed the medical evidence and endorsed the autopsy conclusions.

[5] See "The Medical Evidence in the Assassination of President John F. Kennedy," *ibid.*, pp. 9-19.

[6] Writes Dr. Wecht: "The X-rays and photographic materials give every indication of being authentic . . . and the facial features, where they can be seen, are consistent with the . . . author's recollections of the President," *ibid.*, p. 14.

[7] Those with lingering affection for the flying-saucer cause are directed to the masterful debunking in Philip J. Klass, *UFO's Explained* (Random House).

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others, like Vincent Salandria, predicted early on that the X-rays and photographs finally given the public would be doctored. Dr. Wecht summarized the unanimous opinion of every doctor who has seen the autopsy materials in an article written after he had spent two days with the X-rays and photographs:

> The available evidence, assuming it to be valid, gives no support to theories which postulate gunmen to the front or right-front of the presidential car. The wound in the President's head can only have been fired from somewhere to the rear of the President.[8]

If that doesn't put the matter to rest, a careful perusal of Chapter 19 of the Rockefeller Report on CIA activities should. Ordered to check out rumors of a CIA assassination plot, the Commission staff[9] assembled a group of five experts[10] with expertise in forensic pathology, neuropathology, radiology, gunshot wounds, and accident reconstruction, and asked them to review the films of the assassination (Zapruder, Nix, and Muchmore), the autopsy materials, the President's clothing and back brace, and the bullet and bullet fragments recovered, to determine whether there was any evidence of a hit from the front, the front-right, or from both the rear and front-right. Their reports, submitted separately, completely confirmed the Warren Commission's conclusions: there was no evidence of a hit from the right; the violent motions of the President's body could not be attributed to a bullet from any source, but rather to "a seizure-like neuromuscular reaction to major damage inflicted to nerve centers in the brain." In testimony before the commission Dr. Wecht agreed that such a reaction could have happened within a tenth of a second. As for the slight movement of the head backward immediately after the hit, the panel explained that the explosion of tissue out of the exit wound would have produced a "jet effect," causing the head to move back in the direction from which the bullet came, almost instantly. I would add that the testimony of motorcycle policemen riding fore and aft the President's car indicates that a strong wind from a direction in front of the car may have blown the tissue backward.

One witness before the Rockefeller Commission directed its attention to frame 413 of the Zapruder film in which, he argued, one could plainly see an assassin in a German army helmet, or perhaps some form of rain hat, and a gun. A photograph of that frame has appeared in several of the underground newspapers which spread the rumors germinated by consiracy detectors around the land. Since the assassin is not present in frame 411 or 415, the Commission concluded that it was unlikely that he had appeared and disappeared in a sixth of a second. Also, because the tree he was allegedly hiding behind was only inches wide, just five feet in front of Zapruder, and right out in the open for hundreds to see, it seems unlikely that he would have gone unperceived. Calculating distances from Zapruder's camera, the Commission concluded that the assassin's head with or without helmet would have been the size of a large lemon, if head there momentarily was. As for the gun, it turns out to be as much a figment of light and shadow as the assassin who is supposedly holding it.

Two final items may help convince the convincible that all the massive speculation about a gunman to the right based on the Zapruder films is utterly baseless, however persuasive such speculation may have once seemed. First, a bullet fired from the front-right striking the President in the rear portion of the skull on the right side of the head would cause the head to turn right, not left. Only a strike in the front of the head would have caused the leftward head-snap so obsessively dwelled upon by critics of the Commission. Second, with regard to the earwitness testimony about shots from the grassy knoll, many people obviously did think they heard shots coming from the knoll; others heard shots coming from the Book Depository. But to anyone interested in the singular reality of the assassination, the question to ask of earwitnesses should be: how many heard shots coming from two different directions? In other words, of some 190 earwitnesses whose reactions are recorded, how many heard the shooting in the single way the critics imply it happened? The answer is: one.[10A]

How does one add up the sum of emotions Americans have expended on what are now revealed as utterly illusory speculations arising out of the Zapruder film and the head-snap? Whole portions of respected books must be discarded as worthless (one thinks of Professor Josiah Thompson's *Six Seconds in Dallas*), for in matters of factual truth, momentary ingenuity and (apparently) passionate sincerity count for nothing. Professor Thompson, who worked closely with Dr. Wecht in preparing his

[8] *Forensic Science Gazette*, September 1973, p. 18.

[9] Critics have pointed ominously to the fact that attorney David W. Belin, executive director of the Rockefeller Commission staff, was a lawyer on the Warren Commission. In fact, for that reason, he did not participate in the preparation of Chapter 19, turning the Kennedy assassination investigation over to senior counsel Robert B. Olsen.

[10] Lieutenant Colonel Robert R. McMeekin, chief of the Division of Aerospace Pathology of the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology; Dr. Richard Lindenberg, director of Neuropathology and Legal Medicine in the Maryland Department of Mental Health; Dr. Werner U. Spitz, Chief Medical Examiner Wayne County, Detroit, Michigan; Dr. Fred J. Hodges III, professor of Radiology at The Johns Hopkins School of Medicine; and Dr. Alfred G. Olivier, director of the Biomedical Laboratories at the Edgewood Arsenal, Aberdeen Proving Grounds, Maryland.

[10A] A. J. Milliken, but he also thought there were eight shots where most people heard the three alleged by the Warren Commission. Warren Report, Vol. 19-H, p. 486.

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book, has known for nearly three years that major portions of it must be discarded as baseless gossip, and so too has every student of the assassination. One recalls no public concessions of error. Indeed in the spate of articles now appearing in the wake of Watergate, one hears the same ground gone over again and again. Mark Lane is back on the college lecture circuit rehashing old mischief, most of which has even been discarded by other critics. A writer like George O'Toole, whose fanciful book, *The Assassination Tapes* (Penthouse Press), has received a big play in the sex magazines, rehearses lines of argument which he admits are far-fetched, as if to say: any event which can generate such heated comment, even plainly absurd comment, can't be completely clean. And here is the staid old *Saturday Evening Post*, September 1975, with a Norman Rockwell portrait of Kennedy on the cover, and within, sandwiched between the familiar homespun nostalgia, a section on the "unsolved murder mystery," featuring decade-old speculation about the back and neck wound and pictures of the leading critics of the Warren Commission: the new culture heroes.

Hannah Arendt has written that the opposite of a fact is a lie. There will come a time when many of the writers and lecturers who have gained celebrity by raising doubts about the assassination will be known for what they occasionally were: conscious liars. But in explaining the grip these writers have on audiences and readers (and editors), one must invoke a public psychology quite familiar to the historian of witch crazes and other paranoid enthusiasms in which even proven fantasies retain lingering reputation. When it comes to the Kennedy assassination or, for some, the Rosenberg or Hiss cases, normally rational people display the sweet madness of the flying-saucer freak or the Bermuda Triangle buff who makes no effort to hide his assumption that a palpably mistaken identification of a flying object or ocean mishap is an identification of some sort which retains status as evidence.[11]

Characteristically, the assassination critic will move swiftly from one critical riff to another, never pausing long enough to permit reader or listener to test the validity of each separate provocation. Over the past ten years one has seen one after another of these riffs dissolve as completely as must any speculation about the head and back wounds, though that has not dissuaded cunning writers and orators from rearranging them in new improvisations. Thus, the photograph of Oswald, rifle in hand, is not a fabrication, but a picture taken on his camera by his wife seven months before the Kennedy assassination—the shadow under Oswald's nose notwithstanding. Any jury in the world, except perhaps one made up of assassination critics, would have found Oswald guilty of shooting officer Tippit, which is not to say that the defense attorney in the case would have been at a loss for words. The picture of two derelicts arrested after the shooting does not reveal the faces of E. Howard Hunt and Frank Sturgis: the derelict Hunt is shorter, older, and fatter than the real one; the derelict Sturgis much taller and lighter than his alleged look-alike. And the several photographs allegedly showing another gun or gunman have, after years of the most intense scrutiny, one by one, proved to be mirages.[12]

It is usually the case in public discourse that revelations of major errors invalidate the accompanying case. When the graduate student admits faking test results, the professor is expected to denounce the conclusions resting on those results. With the assassination very different rules of discourse seem to prevail: as soon as a new line of speculation appears and remains temporarily unrefuted, all the rest take on new life. Reviewing Mark Lane's *Rush to Judgment* (1967) soon after it appeared, Norman Mailer, who has often claimed he is able to recapitulate the deepest currents and emotions of the times, wrote, in the *Village Voice*, that if just one-tenth of what Mark Lane was charging was true, there was serious mischief afoot in the land. A less contemporary judgment would hold that if nine-tenths of what Lane said was nonsense, the chances of the rest containing much sense are very slim.

III

It is impossible to soothe every doubt generated by this veritable religion of suspicion, but before moving on to some general reflections on the meaning of these assassination tales and their relation to other clusters of doubt—the Rosenbergs and Hiss—let me try to deal with two lines of argument which for many are the redeeming 10 per cent. One concerns the timing of the shot which struck Governor Connally, and the other concerns the famous bullet, exhibit 399. Together they comprise the last stands of Dr. Wecht and others.

By now all agree that the single-assassin theory requires that one bullet strike Kennedy high in the back, exit from his throat, and then hit Governor Connally, causing all of his five wounds and broken bones: (1) an entry wound in the back near the right armpit; (2) a shattered fifth rib and an exit wound below the right nipple and twenty-five degrees below the back wound; (3) an entry wound on the knuckle side of the right wrist about two inches up from the wrist joint and a broken wrist bone; (4) an exit wound on the palm side three-fourths of an inch above the wrist crease; and (5) a shallow puncture of

[11]The spoil-sport in the Bermuda Triangle brouhaha is Lawrence David Kusche, *The Bermuda Triangle Mystery: Solved* (Harper & Row).

[12]For a fascinating account of a twelve-year effort to find something in the pictures, which turned up nothing, see Maurice W. Schonfeld, "The Shadow of a Gunman," *Columbia Journalism Review*, July-August 1975, pp. 46-50.

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the left thigh about five inches above the knee.

Connally was seated on the jump-seat directly in front and slightly to the left of Kennedy; it is difficult to see how a bullet exiting from the President's throat could miss him (which is one reason the first-generation critics strove so mightily to keep that bullet from coming through). If the bullet did miss Connally, it could not have missed the interior of the open car, and the absence of any damage to the car caused by a high-speed bullet, barely slowed by its passage through the President's neck, argues strongly that the bullet in fact struck Connally. The car was thoroughly examined by the FBI within forty-eight hours of the assassination; one doubts that the FBI covered up evidence of bullet damage, not because that agency is incapable of fibbing but because the FBI could not have known what lies to tell that early. It seems logical to conclude that the bullet struck Connally in the back and precisely in the place he was actually hit.

The ambiguity fastened on by the critics arises because the Zapruder film seems to show Connally being hit well after Kennedy but too soon after to allow for the possibility that he was struck by a second shot from the same rifle. During frames 207-225 of the film, which was running at 18.3 frames a second, Kennedy is out of view, blocked by a sign. As he reemerges to view in frame 225 it is clear that he has already been hit: both hands are clutching at his throat (which, according to the critics, has not yet been wounded). However, Connally's reaction is not dramatically visible until frame 237, perhaps a second after Kennedy was struck. Professor Thompson, whose book deserves a graphics award, has dwelled lovingly on that and the ensuing three frames, directing the reader's attention to the sudden slump of Connally's right shoulder between frames 237-38 and the puff in his left cheek. Connally himself, reviewing the films frame by frame, thought he was hit somewhere between 231-34. He does not remember ever being aware of wounds to his wrists and thigh. Both men, let it be stressed, were hit from above and behind, not from the knoll. The question is, was it by one or two assassins?

Delayed reactions to a bullet hit are not uncommon; by dwelling on the Zapruder film frame by frame the critics distort the time values in the case. If, as to me seems obvious, Connally was struck by the same bullet as Kennedy, a reaction a second later does not present a major challenge to the credibility of the Commission's reconstruction of the shooting. But there is one set of facts in the case—apart from the fact that the bullet which exited from Kennedy's throat could not have missed Connally or the car—which proves beyond honest doubt that they were hit by the same bullet, and that has to do with Governor Connally's wrist wounds. No critic has ever disputed these basic facts or interpretations of fact: (1) that the wound of entry in Connally's wrist was on the knuckle (dorsal) side an inch and a quarter further up the arm than the exit wound on the palm (volar) side; (2) that the bullet which struck Connally's wrist had already struck something else, blunting its impact; (3) that Connally had a shallow puncture wound in his left thigh caused by a large missile whose force was almost dissipated by the time it struck. As Howard Roffman, a third-generation critic who has shaken-down and shaped-up a decade of criticism puts it: "It is probable that one bullet caused all of Connally's injuries."[13]

A careful perusal of the Zapruder film reveals that in frame 225, as Kennedy reemerges into view from behind the sign, Connally's torso is turned slightly to the right and his head is turned far to the right, perhaps executing the look backward the Governor vividly recalls making after the first shot. His right arm is over his lap, the wrist over the left thigh; his right hand, knuckles up, is grasping a wide-brimmed hat. At that point, a split second after Kennedy was hit, he is in perfect alignment to receive all his wounds. Assuming he was in something like this posture a moment before, that would be the only moment when the double hit was plausible: but then that is the only moment when the Warren Commission says it happened. By frame 230, however, *before* the critics say he was struck, Connally has begun to turn to his right; he has raised his right hand, which is still clutching the hat; his knuckles are just above and facing his right shoulder, his elbow is at his side. All during the 230's, as he continues his turn to the right, Connally's knuckles are at least shoulder high, his elbow at his side. By frame 240, slightly more than a second after Kennedy was struck, he has turned 90 degrees to the right and is facing out the side of the car. A bullet striking Connally when the critics say he was hit then would have had to exit from the chest at a downward angle; to have taken at least two sharp turns upward, in midair—right and then left into the knuckle side of the wrist; and then, upon exiting on the palm side, further up in the air than the wound of entry, would have had to execute a very sharp U-turn into the thigh:[14] plainly impossible. Indeed in order for a gunman to have wounded Connally in the wrist during those frames, he would have to have been firing from the floor of the car. But no gunman was noticed there.

To affirm the Commission's version of the shooting, then, one need only live with the possibility that the Governor *accurately* remembers his own thoughts and reactions at the

[13] *Presumed Guilty* (Fairleigh Dickinson Press, 1975), p. 132.

[14] Also to avoid hitting the hat, which would have been struck if the bullet came straight out the palm side.

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time but that his reactions were slightly delayed. His failure to remember ever being hit in the wrist or thigh confirms that he is not the best witness to what happened, however well he remembers what he thought happened. As for the sudden slump of the right shoulder and the puff in the left cheek, they are clearly there in frames 237-38, but viewed in the context of the moving film are part of an earlier motion commencing in frame 230, when Connally begins a rapid turn to the right which is completed a little more than half a second later in frame 240. Living with these slight ambiguities should not prove an impossible burden for a citizen to carry through life as compared with the manifest impossibilities demanded by the critics' version of the shooting.

But significantly, the critics have no difficulty with the impossibilities of their own theories. One of the reasons I have dwelled on this matter in such detail is to demonstrate the utter recklessness of men who are respected as the most responsible critics of the Warren Commission and the tolerance for recklessness which has developed in this country in the last decade. The critics don't care to reconstruct a singular reality, preferring a strategy of pure attack, from contradictory points of view. Testifying before the Rockefeller Commission, Dr. Wecht has the audacity to argue that the fact that Connally still held his hat in frame 237 proves that he hasn't been struck in the wrist yet, when Wecht must know that if Connally had not yet been struck in the wrist, then he never was, for the wrist will never again be in a position to receive its wounds from any plausible source. I know of no critical work on the assassination which even acknowledges Connally's wrist as a problem for an alternative version of the shooting. And not because these writers are unaware of the problem; no one who has lived with these movable jigsaw-puzzle parts as long as they have can fail to know exactly where the parts refuse to fit together. Professors are taught in graduate school that a complete critical argument must include frank acknowledgment of the difficulties in one's position, a rhetorical figure known as prolepsis, and one which I am obviously fond of. Scholarship which avoids facing the obvious problems carries the scent of dishonesty.

ALL of which brings us finally to the famous "magic bullet," as it has been dubbed by the critics, exhibit 399, which, in my view, presents the only serious challenge to the Warren Commission's case; how serious, the reader can judge.

The bullet was found on the ground floor of the Parkland Hospital in Dallas, within an hour of the shooting, by Darrell C. Tomlinson, the hospital's senior engineer. Kennedy and Connally had been taken on stretchers to two different emergency rooms. The President remained on his stretcher until he was declared dead, but the Governor was immediately transferred to an operating table. Whereupon: a nurse, Jane C. Webster, rolled the bloody sheets on his stretcher into a small bundle; an orderly, R. J. Jimison, placed it on an elevator; and Tomlinson removed the stretcher from the elevator, where it had been for perhaps ten minutes, and placed it in a corridor on the ground floor of the hospital alongside another stretcher unconnected with the care of either man. Somewhat later, Tomlinson shoved one of the stretchers against the wall and a bullet rolled out. He is not sure from which of the two stretchers.

The bullet he found was a 6.5 millimeter, copper-jacketed, Mannlicher Carcano, almost perfectly formed save for a slight distortion in its lead base. It weighed 158.6 grains, about 2.5 less than the average bullet of its type, apparently the result of the lead missing from its base. Ballistic tests performed in the next twenty-four hours established that that bullet had been fired from the rifle, Oswald's, which was found miles away in the sixth floor of the Texas Book Depository. The last of Connally's wounds was a shallow puncture of the left thigh, caused by a large missile whose energy was almost entirely expended. Since no other large missile was recovered which could be related to Connally's wounds, and this one was found in conjunction with Connally's stretcher, the Warren Commission concluded that it was the bullet which had caused all of Connally's wounds after having passed unobstructed through Kennedy's neck.

Through the years the critics took several lines of attack on the bullet. For a while they tried to associate it with Kennedy's stretcher, implying it was the bullet which hit Kennedy in the back and worked itself out.[15] That proved unproductive as it became clear that the bullet which struck Kennedy in the back did not work itself out, and furthermore, that Kennedy's stretcher was nowhere near the place where the bullet was recovered. Then the critics tried to argue that the metallic fragments recovered from Connally, plus those remaining in him and Kennedy, exceeded the amount of metal missing from the bullet, which if true would leave the Commission's case in a shambles. But that too failed to pan out: the weight of the bullet is no longer considered a problem for the single-assassin theory. Then, for years, there were heated demands that the FBI release its spectrographic analysis of the bullet, which, critics promised, would prove that the metal recovered from the bodies was copper and/or from a different bullet. The recent release of that report should stymie this line of investigation, momentarily.

[15]Wecht's summary of the matter is extremely misleading: "The bullet was reportedly found under a stretcher in a remote part of the hospital in the afternoon of the assassination. It was never conclusively determined whether the President or the Governor (or neither) had occupied the stretcher," *op. cit.*, p. 11.

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Still, a problem remains and it is a considerable one. Save for a slight distortion in the base, the bullet is nearly pristine. How, the critics ask, could a bullet which caused seven wounds and shattered two bones, Connally's rib and wrist, have emerged so unscathed? The Warren Commission never conducted tests to ascertain the plausibility of the bullet's shape, but other tests, on bullet velocity, left test bullets considerably more distorted than exhibit 399. Several experts testifying before the Commission were clearly shaken by the bullet's pristine shape and unruffled copper surface, and the Commission's own account of the bullet shows the strain of advocacy.[16] A fair summary of the expert testimony on the bullet is that its shape is improbable, highly improbable to some, but not impossible.

Reality, I have said, happens only one way, but that one way does not always follow the laws of maximum probability. Strange things happen, though never impossible things, and accounts of strange happenings must sound strange. However, if acceptance of exhibit 399 as the bullet which struck Connally implicates one in an improbability of a high order, consider the implications of the critics' version of what happened.

Clearly, exhibit 399 had to have been planted by the real conspirators. No other conclusion is possible. Let us try to imagine how that might have happened. Immediately after the shooting news comes to Conspiracy Central that the President has been taken to the Parkland Hospital; a messenger is sent over to the hospital with a spare bullet fired from Oswald's gun, missing a little lead from the base, though not more than was found in the body. He drops it somewhere, next to Connally's stretcher, as it happens. One wonders, did he inquire, "Where is Connally's stretcher?" (And why not Kennedy's while he was at it?) Months later it becomes clear that this bullet fits neatly into a single-assassin theory. All this effort, recall, is part of a massive scheme to *hide* the existence of a conspiracy from the authorities, when obviously the chances at the time were overwhelming that a bullet from Oswald's gun dropped randomly and irrationally in the hospital would point directly at the existence of other conspirators. Also, this version necessitates that the bullet which really hit Connally, resting finally in the flesh of his left thigh, is missing or was intentionally hidden, and if hidden, hidden before anyone could have known that would be necessary. All official parties to the deceit, of course, have remained silent for more than twelve years. Readers who suspect me of constructing an evadable *reductio ad absurdum* are invited to construct a more believable scenario.

I submit that anyone, like Dr. Wecht, who has seen speculation after speculation about the assassination refuted, and continues to proclaim his vast distrust of the Warren Commission's conclusions while hanging from this narrow thread, is receiving inspiration from a source outside this world and its evidences.

[16]The Rockefeller Commission, so eager to take on the critics on other counts, avoids a discussion of Exhibit 399.

IV

One frequently hears the opinion that if there is nothing fishy about the assassination, then at least the Warren Commission was seriously culpable in not forestalling the enormous controversy which the Report has provoked. But I think careful study of the history of the controversy would show that there is nothing the Commission could have done to silence the more extreme critics or discourage the media and the public's tolerance for their antic accusations. Not that the Commission is beyond reproach: Chief Justice Warren should have forced the Kennedy family to release the photographs and X-rays to the Commission, and even today, one wishes to press the Kennedy family to provide an explanation of why President Kennedy's brain, removed by the autopsy doctors for laboratory examination, was not sent to the national archives along with the other autopsy materials. But to argue that these and other errors provoked the controversy is to commit the fallacy *post hoc ergo propter hoc*. In analyzing the specific debate, as we have done, it is clear that the extreme criticisms of the Report rested on demonological assumptions which no rational arguments could have forestalled. There was no reason, for example, for the Commission's lawyers to have anticipated the discussion of the back wound because the autopsy had already established the absurdity of that whole line of argument. Most human events leave a trail of ambiguous evidence, as every lawyer knows. The lawyers on the Commission had seen those ambiguities dissolve like soap bubbles as the singular reality of the shooting emerged from the burden of evidence; they could not have imagined that a kind of criticism would arise oblivious to the methodology by which events are usually reconstructed.

I have charged some of the critics with conscious deceit because I cannot think how else to characterize writers and orators who continue to rehearse lines of argument which they know are incorrect, who disguise difficulties they know to exist in their own theses, and who argue from palpably contradictory or fantastic premises. If one must begin to assign responsibility for the distracting public debate over the assassination, one must begin with these critics who—well before Watergate, the Pentagon Papers, and CIA revelations, *et al.*—created a controversy whole out of the flimsiest cloth; after that one should go on to the keepers of the media gates, editors and producers, who have sought and sponsored the critics, grateful

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for the distracting thrills they could provide. Those who predict that future government honesty will be sufficient to dispel public distrust must ponder how tiny was the impact of the Clark panel in 1968, which reexamined the X-rays and photographs, and thereby demolished significant portions of the critics' major arguments. Seven years later the debate goes on as if the Clark panel's findings were simply news among news, like the latest sighting of the Loch Ness monster. Meanwhile, the *Saturday Evening Post* is lionizing the principal critics of the Warren Commission, and the Commission's Report is no longer available in paperback.[17]

THE public, for its part, can only be a spectator to all this, as Walter Lippmann said long ago, in *The Phantom Public.* It never judges issues on their merits—having neither the time, inclination, opportunity, nor ability—but rather forms its conclusions from the sound and style of the debate and its brute sense of the plausible. When the Gallup poll finds, as it has consistently since late 1966, that two-thirds and more of the American public doubt the essential conclusions of the Warren Commission, that only means that many people have heard an ill-mannered debate raging and concluded that such passionate and apparently well-informed dissent must signify something. After all, where there is smoke there is fire. But the smoke in this case is only the smoke of verbal battle, a green, chemically produced mist not at all like the black billows which arise from real flames. What is alarming is that the public seems incapable of detecting the difference because its sense of the plausible has come to include incredible charges of government wrong-doing.

The Kennedy assassination, of course, is not the only occasion for the leveling of these charges. Now the debate over the Rosenbergs and Alger Hiss is beginning anew, and in the "proofs" of the innocence of these three, one sees some of the same arts of insinuation practiced by the Warren critics.

"What about the hotel registration?" asks a student who has seen a stunning TV documentary, "The Unquiet Death of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg." During their trial the FBI produced a hotel registration to help prove that Harry Gold had indeed been in Albuquerque, New Mexico, on June 3, 1945, the day he says he received atomic information from David Greenglass. Greenglass seconded Gold's story and said that the Rosenbergs put him up to it. However, Walter and Miriam Schneir (*Invitation to an Inquest*) have studied the photocopy of the hotel registration at the Hilton Hotel where Gold allegedly registered the day of June 3, 1945. On the front, in Gold's hand, is his name and address, and the date, 6-3-45, allegedly written by the desk clerk. But on the back is stamped "June 4, 12:30 P.M." The Schneirs conclude that the card is a forgery, that the meeting did not take place, and that Gold was not even in Albuquerque at the time. Imagine: the FBI has forged a card with Gold's collaboration, to prove he was where he wasn't and somehow gotten the date wrong on the back. The government then makes the card available to private investigators like the Schneirs, confident that the mistake won't be noticed. But that is only part of the absurdity. By denying that a meeting took place in Albuquerque that day, the Schneirs attempt to buttress their contention that Greenglass never gave atomic secrets to Gold—despite both their confessions. In their trial, even the Rosenberg defense conceded that Greenglass was guilty, arguing only that his accusations against the Rosenbergs were false. If Greenglass is lying about himself as well as Rosenberg, if the entire episode of atomic spying was concocted with Gold and Greenglass's collaboration, the government plot against the Rosenbergs becomes much larger by a considerable factor and its ability to carry it off rendered even more implausible.

"But what about the serial number and altered type face?" the student will ask, having heard Hiss or one of his defenders attack the authenticity of the typewriter which helped—but was not needed—to convict him.[18] Belief that the typewriter was forged involves the believer in the contention that a conspiracy to frame Hiss had been going on for a number of years, probably as early as 1938. Having forged documents which seemed to prove that secret papers in Whittaker Chambers's possession had been typed on Hiss's typewriter in 1938, the government then planted a fake typewriter for Hiss's lawyers to find and bring into court to convict him, and then gave the fake typewriter to Hiss's lawyers enabling them to discover the marks of forgery and reveal the plot. Those who know the case know that Chambers only produced the Hiss documents on the provocation of a libel suit by Hiss, and therefore the FBI, or whoever, must have quickly forged the documents, and prepared the fake typewriter, all at a time when forgery by typewriter was thought to be impossible. As usual, all parties to what upon close analysis turns out to be a very wide conspiracy with many contributing participants have remained silent for at least twenty-seven years. As for the serial number and the allegedly altered type-face, they turn out to be dubious proofs of forgery indeed. The defense has never definitely established that the serial number of the machine precludes its being Hiss's, though it has some arresting arguments to make; and

[17] The best presentation of the Warren Commission's case, however, is available in hardcover. It is by a Warren Commission lawyer and the chief of staff of the Rockefeller Commission, David Belin, *November 22, 1963: You Are the Jury* (Quadrangle, 1973).

[18] See "Was Alger Hiss Guilty?" by Irving Younger, COMMENTARY, August 1975.

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while there are some letters whose type-face has been worked on, as might happen to a machine first built in 1928, the letters altered were not the same as those offered for comparison by those experts who testified that the machine in question had typed the documents.

Actually, what these students are asking when they raise these questions is this: "How can honest men who argue so urgently about points of fact in what seems obviously to be a good cause, not have something serious to say? Why hasn't twenty-five years of debate silenced them?" Part of the answer is this: some of them are mistaken, others are zealots, and others, those who hide from their readers and auditors the complete extent of the conspiracy they are implying, are not so honest.

All of which does not mean that there were no Watergate or CIA revelations, no lying in connection with Vietnam. Nor are the bureaucratic, political, and plainly immoral tendencies associated with those events absent from the government's handling of the assassination or the prosecution of Hiss and the Rosenbergs. There is already evidence, for example, that the FBI, fearing that the agency would be blamed for not providing better protection for the President, hid evidence that it knew of Oswald's violent tendencies before the shooting. Nor is some future revelation that Oswald worked in some capacity for the CIA or FBI precluded, though that would not in itself tie those agencies to a plot to kill the President. I would guess that HUAC and the Justice Department's pursuit and prosecution of Hiss and the Rosenbergs were often unscrupulous and excessive, as documents now being released in those cases will probably show. Obviously such wrongdoing cannot be blinked at; indeed, a little paranoia is probably healthy in keeping the scoundrels in line. However, the evil forces conjured by the assassination critics and their like are of an entirely different order. In their hands the system is simply unrecognizable. Among the lessons of Watergate, after all, is that in a free society it is very hard to hide conspiracies for very long, even conspiracies which, in the case of Watergate, are considerably more modest than those implied by the assassination critics. But to those critics the government is capable of anything. We are beset by demons. The delirium and confusion they tend to provoke turns citizens into metaphysical spectators ill-equipped for the hard, realistic vigilance which is necessary to preserve liberty.

Of course, there is no Civil Liberties Union to protect our institutions from slander and rampant paranoia. And I am not calling for an inquisition. I just wish more people, everyone, would shake their fingers at these cranks and say: "For shame!"

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The Palestinian Myth

David Gutmann

STATELESS people, marginal to every society, carry with them the aura, the mystery, of the stranger. Seeming not quite human, they are regarded by "proper" humans with a mixture of repugnance and awe. In the case of Jews and Gypsies, repugnance has usually dominated, but in the case of the Palestinian Arabs, the most recent arrivals to the stateless condition, the balance is reversed, in that much of the world now regards them with a significant degree of awe. Indeed, the Palestinian *mana* is so strong that Yasir Arafat, their spokesman, could enter the UN flaunting a holster, and in the name of peace call for the politicide of a member nation, itself a creation of the United Nations. Clearly, Arafat's legitimacy, his charisma, derived from roots deeper than Third World petulance, or the anti-Zionism of the Soviet bloc.

Arafat's UN triumph was a sign that a new myth (or a new version of an old myth) had been legislated into received, historic truth. In the months since his appearance, the Palestinian cause has been now at the forefront, now in the background, of the political drama in the Middle East. With the successful signing of the latest accord between Egypt and Israel in the Sinai, however, it seems clear that the focus of attention will again shift to the Palestinians, and to their by-now established version of the history of their displacement from their land.

In its essentials the revised myth of the Palestinians reads like this: Israel came into being via a historic and genocidal crime. By cunning, terror, and overwhelming force the Israelis stole a land from its rightful owners, the innocent Palestinians, a people they almost destroyed through murder and deracination. Apparently, this is a lie whose time has come: it was first circulated by the Palestinian Arabs themselves, but it has since been taken up and embellished by Third World leaders of all kinds, by the Chinese and, in a milder version, by the Soviets, by many "progressive" Europeans, by UN officials, by liberal clergy in this country, by elements of the American Left, and—since Jews also like to be where the action is—even by some alienated Israelis, Reform rabbis, and American Jewish university students.

Perhaps the most sophisticated and plausible statement of the revisionist myth comes from the Arab political scientist, Walid El-Khalidi, who asserts that overwhelming Jewish military power dictated an aggressive, attacking Zionist policy even before the partition plan of 1947 was ratified by the UN.* In order to implement the UN plan against the wishes of the native Arabs, Dr. El-Khalidi claims, the Jews had to take offensive action so as to drive out the Palestinians before May 1948, and while the British forces were still in place, to prevent a rescue invasion by the armies of the neighboring Arab states. El-Khalidi asserts that this monolithic and confident Zionist plan unrolled in two stages. The first, "Plan C," called for harassment of harmless Palestinian villages, and reinforcement of isolated Jewish strong-points already established in predominantly Arab areas. Well armed, but short on time, the Haganah from the outset had to attack ruthlessly; El-Khalidi claims that only the heroism of the Palestinians kept the Israelis from accomplishing all their aims in the first days of the war. Despite "repeated attacks on sleeping villages," he asserts, the Palestinian peasantry stood firm, and no Arab community was evacuated in the period from November 1947 (when fighting first broke out) until the end of March 1948.

Their timetable upset by stubborn Arab resistance, the Israelis, according to El-Khalidi, then escalated their terror tactics, and moved to "Plan D" (*Dalet*) in which eleven well-armed and trained brigades of the Palmach, the Irgun, and the regular field army moved systematically to "cleanse" Arab Palestine of its native inhabitants in areas evacuated by British forces but not yet open—since the Mandate was still in force—to regular Arab armies. El-Khalidi insists that Plan *Dalet* was not opposed by significant Arab military forces, regular or otherwise: the Jews moved against Palestinian communities not for tactical reasons, but with the sole purpose of destroying their inhabitants, or bringing about their panicked flight. The Haganah pursued this genocidal plan

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*W. El-Khalidi, "Plan Dalet," *Middle East Forum*, November 1961.

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until the last days of the British Mandate, when the regular Arab forces were finally free to intervene to rescue their Palestinian brothers and halt the Jewish onslaught.

In the guise of historical research, El-Khalidi has written a morality tale, a kind of fable in which the forces of good are strong in spirit but weakly armed, while the forces of evil are cowardly but possess the biggest battalions. Though the historical truth has been stood on its head, the Jews did after all win; hence the belief that the initiative and weaponry *must* have been with them. I am personally bored with the whole debate over what has been called Zionist original sin. But Jewish silence—particularly on the part of those who were witness to the times—can be taken as another evidence of Jewish guilt, and can thus help to spread the myth of Jewish sin. As one who served in a Haganah squad established shortly after the partition decision of 1947 (and which trained in the Sharon plain, one of the first areas to be evacuated by the refugees), let me then try to correct at least part of the record concerning who the refugees were, how they became refugees, and who was responsible for their flight.

THE pivotal charge in El-Khalidi's scenario is that the Jewish *Yishuv* was prepared and eager for war even before partition, that it seized and held the initiative from the very outset. Would that this imputation of strength were true—some very good people might still be alive. In actual fact, however, the Haganah lacked defensive as well as offensive capability in 1947, and whatever alphabet of so-called "Plans" it may or may not have harbored, the Haganah was neither prepared nor willing to launch an offensive at that time. Even before the war of independence began, the *Yishuv* was already war weary. A very significant percentage of the total Jewish population had recently served in the Allied forces during World War II; in addition there was the nerve-wracking struggle against the British, involving stern reprisals, which had continued ever since. If the *Yishuv* had one main priority in 1947 it was free immigration, the right to bring in, without hindrance, the Jewish survivors of the Holocaust, a priority which took precedence even over statehood. The Arab-inspired British White Paper of 1939, restricting Jewish immigration to Palestine just before the European Holocaust began, had taught the Zionists a vital lesson: control over Jewish immigration could only be entrusted to Jews, and Jews could exercise this trust only within some framework of statehood. A state meant Jewish police and immigration officials at the ports; it meant Jewish politicians in charge of immigration policy; and it meant a Jewish majority to uphold the Law of Return.

Equating the state with free immigration, and with release from British rule, the *Yishuv* greeted the first news of partition with almost frantic public rejoicing, not the spirit customarily associated with a mobilized war machine. That initial mood of hectic optimism, based on a desperate belief that the Arabs, like the British, would accept the partition of Palestine, lasted until the Arab attacks began. Arab irregulars, as well as disguised Syrian and Iraqi regulars, quartered themselves in strategic Arab communities and with increasing boldness attacked Jewish settlements, cities, and vital road links. The Haganah at first conserved its strength and relied mainly on static defense against these assaults. Thus, for example, though Jaffa, a predominantly Arab town, later fell to Jewish forces, Tel Aviv did not initially assault Jaffa. Rather, Jaffa put heavy fire into Tel Aviv; even the turret of the highest mosque in the Mansheih quarter was pressed into service of the *Jihad*, serving as a sniper's nest.*

The British presence, moreover, contrary to El-Khalidi's assertions, was far from favorable to the Haganah. While the British forces did not effectively block the entry of quasi-regular and irregular forces from Arab countries, they did continually hamper Jewish defense and retaliatory operations. My own squad, for example, while training in a British-controlled region, had to maintain the farce that we were on a training course for sports instructors. On patrol or training missions we hid our weapons: otherwise the British troops quartered nearby would have either killed us, jailed us, or confiscated our guns.

But El-Khalidi's most incredible rewriting of history concerns the initial firepower of the Haganah. True, the Jews did have—as he claims—some 10,000 rifles, but he fails to mention that these were of every make and caliber that had been imported or smuggled into the Middle East since Ottoman days. The same was true for the 600 machine guns reputedly in Haganah armories: many were ultra-simple and dangerously unreliable Sten guns, mostly constructed, cottage-industry fashion, in underground Haganah workshops. Like the polyglot collection of rifles, they were not the standardized, reliable automatic weapons required for the brigade-level offensive sweeps that El-Khalidi and other Arab apologists have injected into the historical record. And, finally, whatever the extent of the Haganah armory, it was not at the outset available for mobile operations, but was rather dispersed, mainly under piles of dung, in the "slicks" as they were known—secret storerooms of the *kibbutzim* scattered around the country. Such concealment

*It is no longer remembered, but the *first* refugees of that bitter little war of 1947 were not Arabs; they were Yemenite Jews from the polyglot sector between Jaffa and Tel Aviv. The Yemenite Jews are not now celebrated as refugees: their fellow Jews—unlike the Arabs—did not put them into refugee camps, but instead accepted them into the Ashkenazi quarters of Tel Aviv. Until Jaffa was taken by the Haganah, virtually every apartment house in Tel Aviv had a Yemenite family camped in its lobby and using the cooking and sanitary facilities of the regular tenants.

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served to keep weapons out of British hands, and available for local defense, but by the same token it made them less accessible to pan-regional striking forces.

Thus, my own unit, consisting of more than 100 men, and presumably training as a commando unit of the elite Palmach, fielded *in toto* about fifteen weapons, a museum of antiquated pieces, and no mortars or heavy machine guns to back up even a modest attack. So we played soldier in the soft Palestinian springtime, charging with sticks through poppy fields, and assaulting Roman ruins whose original builders, no doubt better armed than our Beaver Troop, could have repelled us without trouble. But it did not remain fun and games for long: our relatively disarmed condition was bitterly dramatized when the combat veterans among us were called out to participate in the first large-scale operation—code-named *Nachshon*—undertaken by the Haganah. This was a desperate, costly, and finally unsuccessful operation whose goal was not to disinherit the Palestinians of their land, but to lift the dangerous Arab siege of Jewish Jerusalem, by opening the blocked road from Tel Aviv. Unexpectedly, instead of moving out with the assault convoys, some of our men returned to camp. They had refused to fight after their unsentimental commanders revealed that there were not enough guns to go around, and that unarmed soldiers should "take weapons from those who fall." These boys had fought before, and were willing to fight again, but they could not stomach the idea of waiting (and even hoping) for a comrade's death, so as to inherit his weapon. So much for the overwhelming armed might of the Haganah in the first months of the war of independence.

THAT the Arabs often transformed themselves into refugees almost casually, and *despite* our evident weakness, is one of those facts that the current Palestinian line is designed to obsfucate. Thus, Sidn'a Ali, the Arab village next to our base, was evacuated before we had even established our camp, and while the protective British were still present in force. Its residents left behind one caretaker as a sign that they would return, presumably when the Jews and their unpleasant little war and unwelcome little state were finished. The *fact* of this period, as so many participants in these long-ago events have testified, is that our Arab neighbors, with thousands of their fellow residents of the Sharon plain, evacuated their lovely and fertile region without clear provocation, and not—as El-Khalidi claims—after a last-ditch stand, or after the British left them defenseless. They left long before we could have moved against them, even if we had wanted to. Some no doubt departed because they did not wish to be relatively suspect and unwelcome minority persons in the Jewish state. Others probably left because they were afraid of what the Haganah *might* do to them once it had gathered its powers. But in very many cases they moved almost reflexively, away from the threat of war itself. They did not leave because of a special genocidal Jewish fury, but because the noise, smell, and disorder of battle frightened them. In the Palestinian case panic was increased by the early flight of well-to-do Arabs, who at the first sign of trouble left for Beirut and other well-appointed Levantine resorts. Arabs are by and large a people who rely on their "notables" for practical guidance and emotional support, and as the front of war moved toward them, they saw no option but to follow the example of their leaders.*

And indeed it did not then—just as it does not now—require a Jewish plan of genocide or even a Jewish invasion to create masses of Arab refugees. The Israelis, for example, save for a one-day strike at the Fatah base of Karameh, have never crossed the Jordan in force, yet, during the 1968-70 "War of Attrition," the East Bank of the Jordan was largely abandoned by its inhabitants. The Israelis did not cross the Suez Canal until the final days of the Yom Kippur War, but the population of the canal-bank cities had long ago fled, leaving ghost towns behind. The Arqub region of Southern Lebanon, where the PLO has established its main guerrilla force, is also empyting out, and for the same reason: the guerrillas strike; the Israelis retaliate against the bases that the PLO—for both propaganda and logistical purposes—locates in villages; and the peasantry, caught in the middle, turns refugee, without any Israeli need—or intent—to "cleanse" the land of them.

There is no doubt that Jews can fight as brutally as Christians or Arabs, and there is no doubt that in some cases they welcomed and even stimulated the Arab flight from Palestine. My point is that Jewish wishes—for Arab flight, or against it—did not much matter. The bulk of Arabs moved away from the track of war, rather than away from Jews *per se*. In effect, the Palestinians gambled with history, and lost: their leaders and elites assumed that the Arab armies would destroy the Jews, and it seemed reasonable to get away while this messy and dangerous business proceeded. The lower classes and the peasantry followed their leaders, assuming that they could return to their villages and—God willing—inherit the well-appointed Jewish holdings as well, when the war ended. Logically, given the unequal balance of

*There were of course exceptions, Arab villages that held out for a long time, and were only subdued at considerable Jewish expense. The large village of Tireh, on the south flank of the Carmel range, troubled Jewish traffic on the Haifa-Tel Aviv highway for more than six months, and forced the Haganah to use armored buses and armed guards on the stretch of road commanded by its snipers. Though cut off behind Jewish lines, Tireh was not taken until the very end of the British Mandate. Then, too, the fighters of Deir Yassin exacted over forty Jewish casualties before their village was taken by Irgun and Sternist troops who retaliated by massacring inhabitants.

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forces, this is the way things should have turned out. And the Palestinian refugees, fixated on the dream that failed, the dream that rationalized their flight, still demand this ending today. They should return to their homes and groves, as they remember them, and the Jews should be gone, or subdued.

Finally, the real contrast is not between merciless, imperializing Jews and innocent Palestinians; it is between a people, the Jews, who stood in place and paid the butcher's bill of history—over 6,000 dead (2,000,000 in U.S. equivalents)—and a people, the Palestinians, who did not. Again, the Arab calculus was reasonable; but it was *not* the calculus of a people with the deep attachment to their olive groves or the profound sense of nationhood that is now claimed for the Palestinians. The 300,000 or so Jews who had been brought in during the war from Displaced Persons camps and from North Africa were largely settled—for want of any other convenient space—in abandoned Arab quarters of Jaffa, Haifa, Jerusalem, Safed, Tiberias, and Ramleh. This is not to grant—as Arab propagandists claim—that the Jews turned the Arabs into refugees so as to make room for their own DP's. In reality, things worked the other way: the Israelis could accelerate the ingathering of Jews—particularly those from North Africa, an unexpected load—*because* of the space that the Palestinian Arabs had made available by their unpredicted flight. Presumably, if the Arabs had not left in such large numbers, the Israelis would still have emptied the detention camps of Cyprus, and the DP camps of Europe, and they would have created some kind of shelter for the immigrants; but, having the windfall of gratuitous Arab space, they were glad enough to use it for resettlement, and thus rid themselves of at least one major problem.

In effect, then, the Arabs brought about, through the war that they themselves started, and their flight from that war, the *fait accompli* that made their mass return to their former homes well-nigh impossible. One could argue that the Israelis should have decided against their own people, evicting the immigrants from their new homes in favor of the needs and moral claims of their enemies. But this would have been to act as no one in history has ever acted or been expected to act; and in any case the state of Israel had been created to receive Jews, not to disinherit them again.

In short, where the Arabs now propose a grand design, a long-prepared and thoroughly worked-out Zionist plan to decimate and deracinate the Palestinians, the actual events were much closer to the sloppy, disorderly patterns of human history. It was a dirty, nasty little war fought at close quarters by intertwined populations, Semitic cousins who had learned over more than fifty years to dislike and fear each other. But when all is said and done, it was war itself that was the beast, and not the Jews. The beast ravaged both peoples, but the Arabs were the first to break and run from it.

BEFORE the Palestinians were sanctified, this less flattering account of their flight was implicitly—at times, explicitly—accepted by front-line Arab countries as well. El-Khalidi insists that the Palestinians stood fast until March 1948, but in actuality by January of that year their exodus had already reached such proportions that the Palestine Arab Higher Committee asked neighboring countries to refuse visas to the runaways. In conformity with this request, Syria for a while even closed its borders to the refugees, on grounds that they were behaving in a disgraceful fashion; and these sentiments were echoed by King Farouk of Egypt, as he berated "the Palestinian Arabs who ran away, leaving their houses and lands empty, giving a chance for a large Jewish immigration and putting Palestine in danger of a Jewish majority." Similarly, Radio Damascus in August 1948: "The Arabs of Palestine are responsible for the heavy losses of the armies in Palestine and the present unfavorable situation. They ran away in the face of a threat by a small minority and spend more time talking over their own affairs than fighting for their country."

Islam is a martial religion; not surprisingly, then, the refugees' sense of defeat—and by Jews!—was compounded by the scorn of their Arab hosts. Fawaz Turki, a young refugee intellectual, writes poignantly in his book, *The Disinherited*, of the insults that he suffered as a boy from his Lebanese neighbors: " 'You Palestinian sons of whores who sold your land to the Jews and then ran away!' " The verbal scorn was underwritten and emphasized by internment: the refugee camps meant, among other things, that the Arab world regarded the Palestinians as a stigma, as a source of shame to be kept out of sight.

A deep sense of shame, indeed, is to my mind the hidden side of the much vaunted Palestinian rage against the Jews, the real root of their own investment in the myth of the genocidal Jew. The refugees who look across the border see that those Arabs who chose to stay in Israel—for all their "second-class" status—made the better choice. The refugees have retroactively salvaged their honor and stifled their shame by revising history, by claiming that their own flight and their own fear were directly proportional to Jewish strength and malice. They sacrificed their children's birthright because they were afraid; and now they justify themselves to their disinherited sons by claiming that they fled for their children's sake. El-Khalidi's vision of "Plan *Dalet*" is only a more sophisticated retelling of the myth that refugee parents fed their children: "The Jews came against us with everything, and we had nothing; they came with American cannons and American planes. They tortured, raped, and murdered. To save your life

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and the honor of your sister I had to go away from our village." The father's need for justification is the author of his conviction; and with each retelling the myth becomes more credible to him and to his audience. The sons believe the story of the fathers' victimization and their own disinheriting; and like good sons they go back, as guerrillas, to avenge their fathers.*

The fathers conjure a Jewish Attila to excuse their panicked flight from Palestine; and the sons use the same mythic image to justify their own expensive failures in guerrilla warfare. Despite better finances and more publicity than most underground movements have ever enjoyed, the Arab guerrillas have not done well: before the PLO was honored by the UN, it was not popular in most West Bank areas; worse yet, the *fedayeen* are routinely betrayed by their own captured fighters, even without the stimulus of torture. But Jews can always be blamed for Arab defeat: the PLO insists that their captives only break security because of the heinous punishments—electric shocks to the genitalia is one of their favored complaints—that the Zionists inflict on them.

And so it goes: each Arab regime plagued with internal difficulties now looks outside rather than inside to find the cause and the solution of its troubles—it looks to the Zionist Jew, the "imperialist-colonialist" cancer within the Arab world. The Israeli Jew who was first used to excuse the Arab defeat in 1948 now becomes the outward metaphor of everything that Arabs cannot tolerate in their national life: they have learned to wrap all their troubles into one neat ball, call it "Israel," and attempt to extirpate it in this convenient form. Thus, every important Arab revolutionary leader or movement —Qaddafi of Libya, Nasser of Egypt, the Ba'ath of Syria and Iraq—starts with brave attempts to revolutionize the inner structure of society, but ends by devoting major energy to military adventures against Israel. Finally, it is always easier to define the Jew as the reactionary and to war against him, than to deal with the terrible contradictions of Arab society itself. The final paradox comes when "Maoist" revolutionaries seek and receive subsidies from the oil sheiks who should be their natural enemies. As they write their large checks to the Fatah, to the PFLP, or to As-Saiqa, these benefactors must mutter to themselves, "Go, play with death on the borders of Israel—and leave me alone." Thus, the ever-elaborated, ever-enriched myth of the Jew as perpetrator of genocide, as racist, as colonialist-imperialist implant into the Arab homeland, becomes one of the prices exacted from historic truth in order to insure some uneasy peace within and among Arab societies themselves.

*If the refugees' investment in the myth of the genocidal Jew is at least understandable (though based on a falsehood), far less explicable, and less excusable, is the perpetuation of the myth by certain Christian clergymen in the United States. Thus, the Quakers' "even-handed" document, *The Search for Peace in the Middle East*, calls for the "just recognition of claims denied to the abused Palestinian people" without even noting Palestinian responsibility for starting the war that turned them into refugees. Thus, too, on Palm Sunday 1972, the Very Rev. Francis B. Sayre Jr., Dean of the National (Episocopal) Cathedral in Washington, sermonized against Israeli governance of a united Jerusalem: "Now the Jews have it all. But even as they praise their God for the smile of fortune, *they begin almost simultaneously to put Him to death*" [emphasis added]. As if Jerusalem could ever be altogether theirs—or anyone's! But now oppressed become oppressors: Arabs are deported; Arabs are imprisoned without charge; Arabs are deprived of the patrimony of their lands and homes; their relatives may not come to settle in Jerusalem; they have neither voice nor happiness in the city that after all is the capital of their religious devotion too!" In his zeal to pile up charges Dean Sayre forgets that Mecca, rather than Jerusalem, is the "capital" of the Arabs' "religious devotion." But one may doubt whether he is as vitally concerned with infringements of Arab rights in Jerusalem as he is with the fact that it is Jews who now rule that city, for while Jerusalem is not the capital of Islam, it *is* the capital of Christianity; Dean Sayre pleads the Muslim's cause, but he clearly wants the Jews out of *his* capital. And like the ancient founders of Christianity, he disputes the Jewish claim to Jerusalem, and to divine favor, by resorting to the charge of deicide: those, he suggests, who once crucified Christ in Jerusalem are presently crucifying Palestinians there. Behind much liberal clerical concern for the rights of Palestinians there undoubtedly lurks this transmogrified idea of the Jew as Christ-killer which Dean Sayre explicitly avers here.

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Liberals & the Presidency

Paul H. Weaver

AMONG THE many reversals of ideological role that have taken place in American politics in recent years, perhaps the most spectacular has been the abandonment by American liberals of their longstanding commitment to the strong Presidency. This may at first seem a minor development, reflecting nothing more than the current pattern of party strengths in Washington, but in fact it represents a profound departure from the liberal tradition, and indeed from the constitutional order of 20th-century America. The practical alternative to what Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., now stigmatizes as an "imperial" Presidency is not, as many seem to imagine, a somewhat less grandiose style in the White House and a general revitalization of our institutions. It is instead a seriously diminished Presidency and a sharp reduction in the capacities of American government. The Presidency is not an isolated office but the centerpiece of a complex political system. To change it is to change the whole of which it is a part, and the constitutional whole whose future depends on the fate of the strong Presidency is one created largely by liberals for the purpose of promoting liberal values.

I

TRADITIONAL liberal support for the strong Presidency has its roots in the liberal community's historic ambivalence toward the U.S. Constitution. Liberals, as partisans of democracy and social reform, have always objected to those elements of the Constitution which were designed to "refine" the will of the people and to make it difficult for government to undertake ambitious social programs. But this objection has not been an insuperable one for liberals, who have long understood that America's 18th-century institutions contained possibilities for democratization and reform that the Founders did not contemplate. The Constitution could be made to promote liberal values, they saw, if the powers and dignity of the Presidency were enhanced, and if a doctrine of loose constitutional interpretation which justified that enhancement could be made to prevail. Thus the traditional liberal theory of the wide sphere of permissible government activity, its preference for national government over the states, its defense of a strong two-party system, its commitment to a vigorous and free press, and its attachment to national public opinion as against the forces of tradition and localism.

The political sociology on which this view is based has seen the states as seedbeds of local prejudice and recalcitrance, and Congress as a congeries of special interests dominated by the less progressive elements of American society. The Presidency, by contrast, has been regarded as more likely to be disposed favorably toward liberal objectives. By its nature, moreover, the Presidency, particularly when acting in concert with the Supreme Court, is able to move more directly and effectively than Congress, which is bound by the deliberative process itself as much as by the diversity of the interests it must satisfy. The Presidency, in the liberal view, is uniquely equipped to authorize and give legitimacy to political and social programs which are of urgent importance but which can be counted on to meet opposition or be hamstrung if left to the inherently obstructionist procedures of the national legislature. The programs in whose name liberals have enlisted the support of a strong Presidency have ranged from active anti-Communism abroad to the struggle to end racial discrimination and extend social welfare at home.

The liberal hope for the Presidency, it should be emphasized, has never rested on the election of extraordinary men. It has, rather, been a hope of casting every President, regardless of his personal capacities, in a prime-ministerial role by expanding American expectations of the Presidency and by exploiting the powers of two modern institutions: the political party and the press. Woodrow Wilson, the first modern theorist of the strong Presidency, believed that these alone could transform the Presidency into an authentic governing institution, as distinct from an office that expands or contracts to fit its occupant. The parties as coalitions of local organizations would give structure and focus to presidential elections and would provide Presidents with a permanent

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means of influencing other elected officials. The press would put Presidents on display, enabling them to define new issues and lead public opinion over the heads of lesser officials and party hierarchs. Together, Wilson argued, they would enable Presidents to form and lead real governments, and the electorate to choose governments, and influence their conduct, on substantive policy grounds.

The liberal theory of the strong Presidency was never intended to lead to a personality cult, but it did nevertheless encourage a kind of religious feeling toward the institution and the person—a feeling which reached a peak of sorts in the liberal adoration of FDR. By the late 1950's, Richard Neustadt in *Presidential Power* equated the effort of a President to maximize his personal power with the effectiveness of government in serving the national interest. The liberals' beatification of John F. Kennedy after his death and their enthusiastic worship of Lyndon Johnson before he committed the sin of Vietnam marked the apotheosis of this conception of a strong, activist, power-seeking Presidency. In the early and middle 1960's the conception passed increasingly into the culture to become a dominant theme in movies, novels, journalism, and scholarship.

II

In the intervening decade a revolution has taken place in the allegiances of liberals. Publicists who used to praise the strong Presidency now attack it as the spearhead of imperialism. One-time denouncers of Congress for its "obstruction" of presidential initiatives now look with an approval bordering on exultation upon its growing defiance of the White House; their current complaint is that Congress does not assert itself often enough or sharply enough against President Ford. Liberal politicians who used to rail against the press for its plutocratic bias against progressive Presidents now celebrate the new adversary spirit which consistently emphasizes what is questionable, inefficient, dishonest, and corrupt in the Presidency. And people who used to celebrate the Constitution as a flexible and "living" document now speak of it in legalistic tones reminiscent of John Calhoun.

What accounts for this extraordinary about-face? To some extent, of course, the new attitude is an epiphenomenon of liberal opposition to the Vietnam war and Watergate—inspired by those experiences and articulated for the purpose of mobilizing opposition to the particular presidential policies responsible. But the attitude has long since acquired a life of its own. The Vietnam war, the Watergate crimes, and the Nixon Presidency are now irrevocably part of history, yet liberal retreat from the constitutional heritage of Wilson and Roosevelt continues so far unabated.

The liberals' own story, as told for instance in Schlesinger's *The Imperial Presidency,* is that such changes as have taken place represent not an abandonment of liberal values but a reaffirmation of them. The Presidency, they concede, was intended by the Founders as a quasi-monarchical office with enough power to constitute a strong check on the native factionalism of free societies, and to this was later added the expectation that Presidents would be leaders in the fight for domestic reform. What happened was simply that over time, and especially under the pressures of the cold war, the Presidency became too effective a counterweight against factional turbulence to be compatible with American values. Thus it is not liberals who have abandoned the Presidency, they say; it is rather the Presidency which has abandoned them.

There is something to this argument. War has indeed increased the scope of presidential power, and America's postwar foreign policy has prevented it from contracting. In the popular mind the Presidency has in fact acquired monarchical properties. The White House staff has grown enormously since the time of FDR, and the amount of money spent on the President's person and activity has surpassed the standard of all but a handful of history's most glorious autocrats. The politicization of nearly everything has drawn the Presidency ever deeper into the intimate details of domestic political life.

Yet the truth is that in critical respects the power of the Presidency has not been growing over the last several decades, but diminishing. This is truer in the domestic field than in the field of foreign policy, where the President's powers still overshadow those of the other branches, yet even in foreign affairs, as the War Powers Act of 1973 and Congress's refusal to extend aid to a dying South Vietnam in 1975 have recently reminded us, any objective account of the trend of the last ten years (let alone of the post-Watergate period) has to be one of relative presidential retreat and congressional resurgence. And in the domestic field the matter is even clearer: whether one considers the long-term historical trend or merely the events of recent years, the overwhelming fact is that the Presidency is getting weaker.

A President's constitutional power over domestic affairs is a thing of bits and pieces. His one inalienable source of leverage over the legislative process is the veto, and his principal Executive power lies in his ability to hire and fire about three thousand high-level (so-called "Schedule C") officials at will. Clearly this is not the stuff of which Rooseveltian stature is made, not even when one throws in an Office of Management and Budget, the Commander-in-Chief powers, a Council of Economic Advisers, the right to pre-

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sent messages to Congress, and all the other statutory resources of the White House. Though these are necessary conditions of the strong Presidency, they are far from being sufficient. What makes the strong Presidency strong is, above everything else, its ability to lead public opinion and influence other elected officials. That ability derives partly from the man, partly from circumstance, and partly from the political party and the press. And since men and circumstances vary, what makes the modern Presidency *institutionally* powerful are the resources it derives from the political party and the press. Over the past several decades it has been receiving less and less useful support from these institutions.

More than half a century of "reform" sentiment and "reform" legislation has reduced the political party to a mere shadow of the vigorous coalition of local institutions that it was in the days of Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, and FDR. Organizationally the parties have been eviscerated in most parts of the country, and politically they have been brought nearer the point of impotence by the rising indifference of American voters to the party label and their growing habit of ticket-splitting. The result is that Presidents today have fewer resources for influencing the many other persons in government, especially Congressmen, who share legislative and administrative functions. And they face a growing probability that Congress will be dominated either by the opposite party or by members of their own party whose election owes virtually nothing to the coattail effect and whose chances of reelection are certain to be unaffected by the success of an administration.

The situation of the press is more or less the reverse. Whereas the party has been getting weaker, the press has become much more powerful in recent decades. Partly this is owing to the rise of a new medium, television, and partly it is a result of the emergence since the 1960's of a genuinely national press, whose members practice an increasingly similar kind of journalism and exercise growing influence on the local press through the new "supplementary" wire services and by force of example. Whereas the political party continues to support its President or candidate, however weakly, the press has become ever more committed to a stance of cool independence (at least) and (more often) active mistrust of the Presidency. Thus, recent Presidents have encountered difficulty in establishing their ability, even their personal right and political responsibility, to lead public opinion. They have also discovered that their opponents in Congress have at their disposal a powerful and increasingly cooperative sounding board, owing to the "adversary"—i.e., anti-presidential—spirit that animates many of the most influential segments of the press.

Moreover, while the resources of the Presidency have been diminishing, those of the other branches have been getting bigger, and so has their ability to resist presidential influence. The vastly expanded scope and aggressiveness of the courts is the most dramatic and obvious case, to which may be added the large and growing power of the federal bureaucracy. After a century of civil-service reform, extraordinary growth in size and complexity, and the emergence of a pattern of political cooptation and protection by affected interests, the federal bureaucracy is not now, if it ever was, something that a President truly controls, or even administers. Such effect as he may have on the Executive branch comes only from a decision to concentrate his efforts on a few matters of high importance and narrow scope—or, if he can persuade Congress to go along, to create alternative bureaucracies, which he can then staff with men chosen for their loyalty to him and his policy goals.

But incomparably the most important development—and the one that is least widely appreciated and most often denied—is the fact that Congress itself has been growing steadily more powerful vis-à-vis the Presidency over the last two decades and more. This in part is a result of the ever-lengthening term of service of the average Congressman (it has risen in the House of Representatives from under two terms at the turn of the century to almost seven terms today), the increasing non-competitiveness of congressional elections (less than a fifth of Congressmen are elected with a majority of under 55 per cent), and the consequent growing independence, knowledge, and governmental savvy of the average Congressman. Presidents may come and go (and from 1960 on they have done so with greater rapidity than at any time since the 1850's), bureau chiefs may rise and fall, but today a Congressman stays on forever.

In addition to longevity and independence, Congressmen now enjoy the benefits of the increasingly sophisticated internal organization of their branch of government. "Congress always makes what haste it can to legislate," Woodrow Wilson wrote. "Be the matters small or great, frivolous or grave, which busy it, its aim is to have laws always a-making." How many laws it has a-making is powerfully influenced by the number of its committees and subcommittees; today there are upward of three hundred of the latter in the two houses, and in the Senate more than one per Senator. These units do more than make laws, they also exercise extraordinary power over the administration of public policy. And they can do this with increasing effectiveness and in ever greater detail because of Congress's huge and growing resources. More than 18,000

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persons, appointed without the encumbrance of the civil-service laws, currently serve as staff for Congressmen and congressional committees—a number roughly five times that which the President can appoint—and the budget for all congressional operations now approaches $1 billion. The recently established joint committee on the budget, with its attendant staff, may well expand this congressional capability even further.

In recent years Congress has also been growing more powerful in the critical realm of agenda-setting and legislative initiative, which since early in this century has been one of the Presidency's main legislative preserves. With the technical resources of its enormous staff, and spurred to action by the realization that Congress is now the principal training and recruiting ground for the Presidency, Congress has become a veritable beehive of initiation and innovation. The President's legislative role, at least judging on the evidence of the Nixon years, has become increasingly that of submitting his preferred manner of dealing with a problem that some Congressman or congressional committee has inscribed on the national agenda, ordinarily with the help of affected interest groups, units of the federal bureaucracy, and the press. Thus, every important new regulatory law and agency created during the past several years has been a congressional rather than a presidential project. In short, the Presidency and the committee system have begun to exchange legislative roles.

It is impossible, then, to accept the liberal disenchantment with the modern Presidency as a consequence of the office's expanding and excessive power. The Presidency is not more powerful than it was ten or twenty years ago, it is less so. Its influence is declining relative to that of the other branches. The true growth sector in American government today—measured in terms of size, budget, reputation, or brute power—is to be found not in the White House, but in the bureaucracy, the courts, and especially in the Congress.

III

If the illusory "expansion" of presidential power cannot by itself account for the emergence of the new liberal anti-presidential attitude, neither can the effort by liberals to take political advantage of a situation in which a heavily Democratic Congress confronts an unelected post-Watergate President of the opposite party. The anti-presidential attitude is too pervasive and too intensely held in the liberal community to be just a partisan tactic, and the actions Congress has taken (the War Powers Act, for instance) have been too sweeping and too permanent, promising to hem in future liberal Presidents no less than present conservative ones. Besides, the new liberal anti-presidentialism is not *sui generis* and did not emerge in an attitudinal vacuum. Just as traditional liberal support for the strong Presidency was part and parcel of a larger commitment to democratizing government, to a firmly internationalist foreign policy, and to centralized social reform, so the growing liberal derogation of the Presidency represents a comparably wide-ranging political vision.

Like so many other recent shifts in the predilections and commitments of the American liberal community, the new liberal view of the Presidency reflects the profound sociological and ideological revolution which has been transforming that community over the past decade, and which is summed up in the emergence of what has come to be called the "new class." These are the college-educated professionals and managers whose increasing numbers and strength have made them a visible and aggressive presence in American political life. The particular kind of social "space" the new class has created for itself in America today is overwhelmingly at the managerial level and in the public sector—in government primarily, but also in educational, professional, and other social-service institutions. Its rise within the liberal community has been paralleled by the displacement of the older, urban-ethnic, Southern, and business classes which constituted such a large part of the old liberal coalition.

Politically, the new class espouses a "humanism" that opposes itself to the ideals and achievements of liberal capitalism. It favors a foreign policy which would cast the U.S. as a partner in Third World movements of "national liberation," and a domestic policy which would institute an egalitarian redistribution of wealth and power from rich to poor, from the old classes to the new. The historic liberal-capitalist commitment to economic growth the new class scorns as environmentally unsound and morally gross. Free markets it considers irrational and defunct; its strong preference is for vigorous central planning and social control. The new class believes that the good society is one with a more or less constant (or only very slowly growing) amount of wealth, rationally distributed by government among classes and groups as an act of humane social policy. And it is certain that none of this is possible without a massive redistribution of power from existing private and semi-public institutions (particularly the corporation) to government, and—within government—from the representatives of the old liberal-capitalist classes (machine politicians, business lobbyists, corporate lawyers, the military, etc.) to itself.

In 1972 the new class nominated its first presidential candidate, Senator George McGovern, and new-class politics went down to the most

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drastic defeat in U.S. history at the hand of one of the most flawed and unappealing presidential candidates in memory. This outcome, to be sure, was not entirely unpredictable; for a decade, opinion surveys had revealed that new-class views on everything from racial discrimination and abortion to economic growth and foreign affairs usually attract little support and intense opposition. But at the same time the voters were rejecting McGovern they, or at least some of them, were returning a strong liberal Democratic majority to Congress—a majority powerful enough to stymie President Nixon's intention to dismantle the new-class program in its entirety and, in effect, to impeach him. Thus, 1972 taught two lessons. It showed that new-class politics could not govern directly, through the popularly elected Presidency; it also showed that new-class power and programs could be advanced effectively through Congress and the institutions allied with it.

A resurgent Congress and a weakened Presidency offer a surprisingly adequate instrument for the promotion of new-class concerns. In the area of foreign affairs, weakening the Presidency would accomplish the neutralization of the U.S. on the world scene, effectively assuring the success of "national-liberation" movements everywhere—the U.S. has been the only major power resisting them—and advancing the cause of the "new international economic order" which is the current name for the radical redistribution of the world's wealth. Domestically, the experience of the past six years has shown that in such areas as environmental and safety regulation, energy, affirmative action, and social-policy spending, Congress is quite capable of taking new initiatives without the leadership of a President, or even in the face of his opposition.

The strategic fact about Congress today is that the new-class position in it is a strong one and is getting stronger. Partly this is the result of the enormous and growing staff apparatus mentioned above; partly it derives from the traditional tripartite alliance among congressional committees, federal administrative agencies, and organized "client" interests at a time when more and more of the latter two are dominated by new-class interests; and partly it has to do with the seniority system, recently modified and supplemented by a revitalized Democratic caucus, which is putting more liberal Democrats in committee chairmanships and in key Rules, Ways and Means, and other committee positions. But above all the powerful position of new-class politicians in Congress results from the peculiar character of the institution itself, which has grown increasingly insulated from popular control and from the values that prevail in the constituencies. Unless present trends are halted, the day might not be far off when the classic confrontations in American politics could be between popularly elected, "conservative" Presidents, invoking the authority and will of the national majority, and "resistant," "obstructionist" liberal House-committee chairmen representing only the narrow oligarchical interests of the new-class constituency.

IV

For all this, however, Congress will prove to have—indeed is already exhibiting—its limits as an instrument of new-class liberalism, or for that matter of any distinct and coherent political vision. The reason may be simply stated: congressional government is a contradiction in terms. The constitutional powers and internal structure of Congress render it incapable of acting with coherence, responsibility, and democratic accountability; and even when Congresses have tried to organize themselves to govern, they have quickly found themselves unable to do so. The problem, as Woodrow Wilson explained it in his 1884 classic, *Congressional Government,* is that "though honest and diligent, [Congress] is meddlesome and inefficient; and it is meddlesome and inefficient for exactly the same reasons that made it natural that the post-Revolutionary parliaments should exhibit like clumsiness and like temper: namely, because it is 'without the guidance of recognized leaders, without adequate information, and destitute of that organization out of which alone a definite policy can come.' "

What was true of Congress in the 1870's and 1880's is even more true today, when internal party organization has long since disappeared as a source of even a minimal discipline. The best way to understand Congress in our own time is as a machine whose principal competence is to maximize the likelihood of its members' reelection. In his brilliant recent book, *Congress: The Electoral Connection,* David Mayhew shows how every feature of Congress—staff, committees, party organization, and the like—is shaped to aid members' chances at the polls; the result is a pattern of collective behavior he describes as "assembly coherence," characterized by delay, particularism, the servicing of organized interests, and the practice of symbolic action in connection with all large issues in which the objective is to "take a position" that will please one's constituency. Such a Congress is thoroughly competent at allocating specific benefits like dams or cash subsidies among groups and areas. But it will not or cannot govern. When confronted with hard choices among broad, competing social goods, its characteristic response is one of evasion, denial, and buck-passing.

Indeed, even the 94th Congress itself, hailed as one which finally would take the initiative

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and start governing the country, has begun to alienate many of its friends, especially in the press. The failure of this Congress to enact its own energy program and to override presidential vetoes of bills on strip-mining, job-creation, and energy has moved such writers as Tom Wicker, only yesterday a champion of the weakening Presidency, to conclude that "on complex issues such as these, congressional majorities, no matter how large, cannot really be relied upon to govern. . . . A President can *act,* while Congress usually can legislate effectively only in reaction to or compromise with a presidential proposal."

Thus, the new liberals find themselves torn between their public philosophy on the one hand, and their class interests on the other. It is increasingly clear to them that the former cannot be realized—that their policy objectives cannot be achieved—in the absence of the political resources that only the strong Presidency provides. Yet the social space the new class has made for itself is predominantly in institutions other than the Presidency—in the bureaucracy, the Congress, and the not-for-profit sector. Just as the strong, popular Presidency is the only institution that can achieve the public purposes of new-class liberals, so is it the only institution that can threaten their private interests. Now that Nixon is out of office and the 94th Congress has failed to deliver, it will be interesting—and more than that, it will be deeply revelatory of the moral condition of the liberal community—to see what theme will be sounded in the next round of liberal writing on the state of the American Presidency.

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The New Laureates

John Romano

THEY ARE the two poets most closely attended to by poetry's present audience, the poets of their generation most often singled out for praise. Among reviewers in *Poetry* or the New York *Times Book Review* it is almost a habit to speak of their "greatness," their certainty of lasting, their joining and surpassing of the "central tradition" in American literary art. But the election of A. R. Ammons and John Ashbery to such high favor is puzzling in many ways. Both are dense and difficult poets, whose imaginations move by design through realms not only remote from, but also, occasionally, hostile to the world of our common experience. Ammons's bleak meditations on nothingness and clinical inspections of the not-human, his joy "so winter skinny, such a bugless winter"; Ashbery's vacuous if colorful landscapes, his opaque verbal mysteries and complex toys of style—the visionary as trickster. What can the present chorus of their praise mean?

Taking shape over the past decade in the journals and classrooms of poetry has been something like a Wallace Stevens-William Carlos Williams controversy. Only at its worst has it been a contest of reputations, and its importance goes considerably beyond that of a polite literary-historical "episode." Really it is a delineation, a major delineation by geniuses, of alternative cultural futures: a controversy of values, of rival prescriptions for the activity of imagination vis-à-vis the real world. At its best, then, it is a *felt* controversy among poets and readers of poetry, in which Williams and Stevens are alike respected and their differences of vision are seen usefully to counterpoint and interanimate each other. But inside a few of the more prestigious universities and among writers about poetry elsewhere, the relative ascendancy of Stevens is discernible. One sign is the prominence of the Stevensian critic Harold Bloom and of poet-critic John Hollander. Another is the current prestige of the poetry of Ammons and Ashbery.

To understand what is at stake in the Williams-Stevens controversy, and what an "ascendancy of Stevens" portends, it is probably necessary to spend what Stevens called an "ordinary evening" in Williams's Paterson—that is, in any blasted stretch of the American landscape. Urban, suburban, industrial: not Blakean-Satanic, hardly depressing at all, in fact, but almost transcendently the usual, the "ordinary," in our life and times. It is such a landscape that Williams took to be the inexorable given, out of which American poetry must be constructed. Williams wrote of Paterson's "thousand automatons," who

> because they
> neither know their sources nor the sills of their
> disappointments walk outside their bodies aim-
> lessly for the most part,
> locked and forgot in their desires—unroused.
>
> —Say it, no ideas but in things—
> nothing but the blank faces of the houses
> and cylindrical trees
> bent, forked by preconception and accident—
> split, furrowed, creased, mottled, stained—
> secret—into the body of the light!

"No ideas but in things": a piece of polemic for which Williams no doubt needed the abrupt self-exhortation, "Say it!" He smarted under Stevens's judgment that his work was "anti-poetic." He imagined, even, that the adducing of the hard, matter-bound exigencies of the real was a kind of poetic advance. But Stevens's verdict, in an essay intended as praise, reflected Stevens's very different project, the creation by poetry of a world alternative to the real world of Paterson. Such a world could only be a fiction, but it was not to be an evasion: a fiction made strong, even "supreme," by the investment of the imaginative will of a strong man. That the imagined depends on the real Stevens scrupulously admits, scrupulously resents. But ideas for him reside not in things, but in the imaginative core of our being, remote from Williams's physical world.

Even so bald a description of the differences gives some idea of what an inclination toward Stevens suggests. One good reason for his preeminence in the universities is already apparent. Very little effort is required to misread Stevens in such a way that he underwrites—with genius, even—the quietist withdrawal into the *vita contemplativa*, the disengagement of mind from experience that is ever the academic fantasy. The terms of Ammons's critical success will suggest another reason.

IN 1973 A. R. Ammons's *Collected Poems 1951–1971** won the National Book Award, and subsequently his long poem *Sphere:*

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*The Form of a Motion** earned him the Bollingen Prize in Poetry. This means that many people hold in the highest regard the following lines, or others like them:

> The sexual basis of all things rare is really apparent
> and fools crop up where angels are mere disguises:
> a penetrating eye (insight), a penetrating tongue (ah),
> a penetrating penis and withal a penetrating mind,
> integration's consummation: a com- or intermingling of parts,
> heterocosm joyous, opposite motions away and toward
>
> along a common line, the in-depth knowledge (a dilly)

Thus the opening of *Sphere*, which continues for seventy-nine pages. On the achievement of Ammon's longer poems—the later of the *Collected Poems, Tape for the Turn of the Year* (1965), and *Sphere*—his supporters have staked the largest claims for his merits. And *Sphere* in particular suggests why. It is a difficult but not impossible poem, requiring, or rather allowing, the use of every available critical tool: a playground of interpretation. What is more, all that is found can be turned to account. *Sphere* coheres in *The Form of a Motion*, "the reconciler of opposites, commencement, proliferation, ontogeny." This has enabled several critics to exclaim that they have found Ammons's "system." Nowhere has Ammons confirmed that he has so reductive a thing as a poetic "system," but his word for something similar is "heterocosm." The word figures in Harold Bloom's praise for *Collected Poems:*

> The time has come to suggest that the development of Ammons . . . constitutes the largest hope currently available for another renewal of the central tradition in American poetry. Ammons has all the qualities necessary to this tradition: imaginative persistence, an idiom of his own invention, total mastery of craft, an obsessive yet sanely insightful concern with freedom and fate, and beyond all this, a complete vision of his own heterocosm, at once an alternative world to outward nature yet also the actuality of nature given back to us again.

The endorsement of the world of Ammons's poetry, understood in this way, is evidently a means of fleeing the world and yet having it. It is a means of choosing Stevens's imagined world, of which the poet is creator and possessor, but smuggling into it the "actuality" that Williams's poetry honors in the real. It is the real world made discrete and governable, susceptible to diagram, to system, and to map.

True enough, Ammons has created an alternative world. Since the 50's a distinctive set of concerns, an idiosyncratic vocabulary and point of view have been evolving in his work with recognizable consistency and direction. There is an Ammons world, but its actuality is of a very special kind. Usually his settings are natural or rural, but he has one poem at least on Williams's home ground, called "North Jersey":

> Ninth-circle concrete
> bending in
> high suasions like
> formal reductions of
> perfect fears: refineries
> oiling the air:
> burnt reeds, a chemical
> scald: gouged land &
> shoved mounds:
> and man
> burning fast motions along
> the steely wreaths,
> the steely wreaths.

It is not among Ammons's best poems, but his talents are felt in it. He pictures a massive, concrete slab of landscape that is yet paradoxically in motion, rendered by verbs of action and violence. Some of Williams's meter is echoed, and something of his style. But in the word "suasions" is a clue to Ammons's personal presence in the poem: a favorite word, expressing weighted motion, a coordination of pressure, mass, and place—Ammons frequently has a weights-and-measures orientation to the physical. Equally distinctive, and more troubling, is the curious displacement of emotion. Fear abides in the concrete, but it is abstract, impersonal fear, no one's in particular, as anonymous as the "man burning fast motions." The poem, in its own formal suasion toward the "perfect," reduces rather than strengthens any human relationship we might otherwise have with the landscape in actually seeing it. Characteristically, Ammons's suasion is away from a personal encounter of man and thing, or man and man, and toward a perfection of form.

AMMONS'S eye for physical reality is exact, precise—I have used the word "clinical." He prefers weeds to redwoods, and he is poetic about the displacement of water caused by the legs of an insect on the surface of a pond. But what animates the attention to physical minutiae in the brief, descriptive lyrics by Williams that may come to mind is missing in Ammons: the sense that the object of study, animate or inanimate, participates however invisibly in a continuum of vitality to which we ourselves belong. Things live, for Williams, in their relatedness to the human. Sometimes the relationship is only that of observer and observed, but in Ammons the observer himself vanishes into the hollow behind his own eyes. "Nothingness" licenses the trivial:

> nothingness, far from being failure's puzzlement,
> is really the point of lovely liberation, when
> gloriously every object in and on earth
> becomes just
> itself

* Norton, 79 pp., $6.50.

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The "brilliance" or "joy" purchased by such a platitudinous nihilism, however "silvery" at first, inevitably comes to feel a little cheap. According to Richard Howard, "Ammons is our Lucretius, swerving and sideswiping his way into the nature of things, through domestic doldrums, cardinals and quince bushes, fields of sidereal force, out into what he so accurately calls 'joy's surviving radiance.'" It is not hard to see how Howard has been taken in. There is indeed a level of transcendent meditation in the poems, however pessimistic in tone, and on the other hand there is abundant particularization of the physical universe. There is nothing in between, however, to break the fall from one to the other. There is no middle range, nowhere like that world in which we live, where the generality of the particular, assisted by the imagination, can come to life. And this is the range, after all, of firmest meanings, of possible knowledge, *worldly* contemplations. Its absence may explain why the intellect feels cheated in reading Ammons, despite the dazzling mathematics of his formal concerns. For the result is not only that the trivia of life come to seem in Ammons's poetry more trivial still, by comparison to the dark intoning:

> turn the deepest dark into touch, gape, pumping, at the
>
> dark beyond reach: afterwards, shoveling the driveway,
> warming up the coffee, going to the grocery store, opening
> the cookie jar, washing, shaving, vacuuming . . .

but also that the human, ostensibly personal concerns, when they do surface in the poems, are denuded, hollowed out, confined by form.

This very matter, of the reductive transformation of reality by art, is the explicit theme of some of the poems, including "Corsons Inlet" (1965). The poet walks by the sea and finds

> the walk liberating, I was released from forms,
> from the perpendiculars,
> straight lines, blocks, boxes, binds
> of thought
> into the hues, shadings, rises, flowing bends and blends of sight:

Such liberation enables him to apprehend the formlessness of the natural world, "not chaos" but patterns "over a wider range/than mental lines can keep," and to understand that in this freedom from form the beauty and the "risk" of being consist. He has a vision, finally, in which a viable attitude toward form coheres:

> I see narrow orders, limited tightness, but will not run to that easy victory:
> still around the looser, wider forces work:
> I will try
> to fasten into order enlarging grasps of disorder, widening
> scope, but enjoying the freedom that
> Scope eludes my grasp, that there is no finality of vision,
> that I have perceived nothing completely,
> that tomorrow a new walk is a new walk.

All the more regrettable, then, given such knowledge, to find that "narrow orders, limited tightness" mar the shorter poems in *Briefings* and *Uplands*. "Corsons Inlet" itself is a beautiful poem, deservedly his best-known and most anthologized, written appropriately in loping, generous, inclusive cadences. But Ammons's sharp emotional limitations appear in the poem with special force, and something ironic only can be meant by calling it, as Harold Bloom does, one of the most "moving" contemporary poems. However intense its rhetorical condition, it is a poem about the structure of poetry. Its "content" is a question about form. Behind it there is a fear of contentlessness, which would be ghastly enough as a metaphor for personal consciousness, if that were Ammons's emphasis. Instead, in "Corsons Inlet" as in "Hibernaculum," and indeed in the poem called "Essay on Poetics," Ammons is primarily the poet of the shape of poetic thought. And he shows himself quite as colorless and cold a poet as that implies in volume after volume of severe and radically unpeopled landscapes.

WHAT was most eagerly to be hoped for, then, from Ammons's newest collection, *Diversifications*,* was the development at last of a mutuality of implication between the abstract intricacies of form and the mind's experience of itself—Ammons's most human theme when he has one. Unhappily, one finds instead among the short lyrics the same thinness, a language so spare and hampered as to appear almost self-disdaining:

> Looking for clear water he
> came from murky lowlands
> to the desert and
> after high plains & higher mesas
>
> saw a white mountain
> and going up into the sharp reaches
>
> fell down and drank melt:
> the cold water bore no
> dream: he perished,
> swilling purity.

The sadness here is what indeed comes to maturity in the new volume. Thorough now is the poet's knowledge that purity kills, and yet its attractions for him are greater than ever and not to be resisted—as he announces by his style in most places, and more directly in such poems as "Imago," "The Make," and "Glass Globe." "Facing" is a lovely anomaly, a love poem suggesting how much it is to be regretted that Ammons so rarely favors any but the most austere of his gifts. There are moments, too, in the final, longer poem, "Pray Without Ceasing," when the poet's awareness of "com- or intermingling of parts" in the universe results in a gesture of community among selves. But such a community is approached as a

* Norton, 98 pp., $6.95.

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limit: there is as yet no one but Ammons in Ammons's poetic world.

THE judgment that Ammons is in large measure a poet about poetry also implies that he will be judged an "interesting" poet at the present moment. Just now the death-of-literature is as hot a literary topic as the death-of-God was a theological one a few years ago. Those who have convinced themselves of its demise have nothing but autopsies of texts to perform with their exegetical instruments: hence the deconstructors and demystifiers, equipped with the new semiotics. Ammons himself speaks enough French to read a lesson in the *nouvelle critique* to Shakespeare, who "never got it straight that in talking about the/actual king and the symbolical king he was merely/engaging a problem in rhetoric." But the convenience Ammons offers to critics of this persuasion resides especially in his self-consciousness as a poet, both in those poems in which self-consciousness substitutes for subject-matter, and in others, like *Sphere*, which endlessly offer structural descriptions of themselves: the self-deconstructing poem.

John Ashbery's self-consciousness is more continuous and pervasive still—his newest volume is titled, almost satirically, *Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror** (after Parmigianino)—and has a different significance as well. Critics have noted with excitement, over the years, what they take to be Ashbery's evolution toward a "pure" use of language, a finally impossible condition in which words are stripped of referentiality and the text is a fabric of solipsism, allusion to itself. In fact this teleology is probably a critical myth. Harold Bloom is closer to the truth in saying that Ashbery is the "most legitimate of the sons of Stevens." His poetry does indeed evolve, but toward an ever more militant extension of Stevens's "poem of the mind." Stevens's aestheticism, his assertion of himself against the world by imagination, was not effete or naive. He suffered, to be sure, a pre-Raphaelite hangover of prettiness, he loved words like "Montrachet" and "finisterre," but he took seriously the world's resistance to artifice and imagined forms. The "essential" poem toward which he pointed was to take the place of the world, but could only do so satisfactorily if it could compel, as the real world does, a sufficiency of emotion, of love. There are poems in Ashbery's first book, *Some Trees* (1956), where the young poet came nearly as close to such a feat of imagination as Stevens himself ever did:

> All beauty, resonance, integrity,
> Exist by deprivation or logic
> Of strange position. This being so,
>
> We can only imagine a world in which a woman
> Walks and wears her hair and knows
> All that she does not know. Yet we know
> What her breasts are. And we give fullness
> To the dread. The table supports the book,
> The plume leaps in the hand. But what
>
> Dismal scene is this? the old man pouting
> At a black cloud, the woman gone
> Into the house, from which the wailing starts?

Ashbery set out twenty years ago, then, with an uncanny ability to take us into his confidence about the falsity of his images, and yet to command, nonetheless, our interested response to the images as if they were real and true. What has happened since, however, is that he has come to slight more and more the authenticity of the claims imagination has upon us. In the poems in *Self-Portrait*—in, for example, "Mixed Feelings," —we come to feel unpleasantly deceived:

> How to explain to these girls, if indeed that's what they are,
> These Ruths, Lindas, Pats and Sheilas
> About the vast change that's taken place
> In the fabric of our society, altering the texture
> Of all things in it? And yet
> They somehow look as if they know, except
> That it's so hard to see them, it's hard to figure out
> Exactly what kind of expressions they're wearing.
> What are your hobbies, girls? Aw nerts,
> One of them might say, this guy's too much for me.

We want to believe in a script that he insists on kidding, and ultimately we tire of the increasingly complex, increasingly unfresh reiterations that these are only words, the objects merely imagined, the people disembodied shadows in the poet's mind. That this is true does not redeem its interest; the strength of Stevens's "supreme fiction," to compel as the world compels, has lapsed

Some critics, a little inevitably, are delighted. David Kalstone wrote in the *Times Book Review*, about *The Double Dream of Spring*:

> Ashbery may think of himself as a kind of restorer, removing the varnish and grit from a canvas, or perhaps taking away the canvas entirely, asking us to think the shapes back into the painter's mind. More than any other poet writing now, he sees familiar objects and dimensions *only* as revealing an interior landscape. At that, most of the bric-a-brac is removed, and only the larger landmarks remain.

Kalstone is here responding to a theme that Ashbery himself frequently puts forward in those places where his poems begin to talk about themselves. The theme is ellipsis, the central role played in Ashbery's poetry by leaving things out:

> This leaving-out business. On it hinges the very importance of what's novel
> or autocratic, or dense or silly. It is as well to call attention
> To it by exaggeration, perhaps. But calling attention
> Isn't the same thing as explaining, and as I said I am not ready

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To line phrases with the costly stuff of explanation, and shall not,
Will not do so for the moment. Except to say the carnivorous
Way of these lines is to devour their own nature, leaving
Nothing but a bitter impression of absence . . .

"Absence" is one of several unlikely words about which Ashbery is likely to become sentimental. The above passage "devours it own nature" by being tedious—that is, by leaving nothing out. But the "carnivorous way" is an accurate description of Ashbery's style in the 60's, in *The Tennis Court Oath* and *Rivers and Mountains*, which was nominated for a National Book Award in 1967. These volumes were the work, in a way, of the freest possible imagination; detached, nervelessly hallucinating in lurid colors, its meanings all but obliterated by "this leaving-out business." At times the poems seemed exercises in a relatively innocent surrealism: their obscurity perhaps insuperable, but they made no apparent claims, at least, to a decipherable content.

By contrast, *Three Poems* (1972) is an arrogantly complexifying, self-confounding piece of work. Three long prose meditations—in sequence, we are assured—allegorizing something or other, presumably something about the imagination and the unconscious. Every now and again it needs to be said that accessibility is a virtue in a work of art. Occasionally, *qua* virtue, it must be surrendered, but then with reluctance and only so much as is required. But John Hollander has called *Three Poems*

> a meditational masterpiece, calm in its encounters with minor fictions, desperate in pursuit of a supreme one. Its flutterings are those of the fledged Imagination, its difficulty, that of the Truth.

Difficulty, we know by now, attracts critics, especially difficulty with a hint of secret codes: the second of Ashbery's meditations is called "The System." There is every sign, in fact, of another "heterocosm," but the fate of the real world in Ashbery's poetry is very different from what it is in Ammons's. If the "objective" world is decimated, pulverized in Ammons, or diminished or smothered under the enormous wrappings of his attention to form, in Ashbery it is pointedly evaded, ignored. No one speaks, indeed, of Ashbery's world as "the actuality of nature given back to us again." Instead, his is "the magic world," as he tells us in *Three Poems*:

> The magic world does not really exist. Its dumbness is the proof of this. Indeed any sign of activity on its part would be cause for alarm, since it does not need us, need to signal its clarion certainties into our abashed, timid, half-make-believe commerce of every day.

Little good can be said, in the end, of criticism that is content to decode Ashbery's well-kept secrets, or to map his magic world, his heterocosm—as Bloom does in the essay that Ashbery includes in *The Double Dream of Spring*—without putting, at some point, the question of the value of what Ashbery has to say, without judging his preference for the "clarion certainties" of his private imagination. But the question can only be put and the judgment made with reference to the irrefragable locus of values, the human experience of the world that Ashbery rigorously excludes. It would be unfair to complain of Ashbery that his landscapes are unreal, as unfair as telling him to go write a poem about a tree. In fact he has provided and sustained a beautiful and brilliant flow of images, to be had for their own sake. On first reading especially there is an associational richness, a remarkable variety of tone. But it is decisively disappointing to find behind his fictions, as behind Ammons's apparent scrutiny of the real, no pressure of feeling, no conviction, no intensity, other than what little attaches to a poetic program and a desire to be abstract.

I HAVE been examining the heads upon which laurels lately have been placed with the intention of learning which way "we"—or the official representatives or the professional fashioners of our choices—are inclining. The answer is nothing so simple as saying, as I began by doing, that we incline toward Stevens. For one thing, Stevens himself is badly served by some of his most prominent critics and disciples. There is a strong Stevens, whom J. Hillis Miller calls a "poet of reality": His "supreme fiction" was meant to vie with reality as a preferable sphere of being, not to provide fictive shelter from it, which is what is cherished in the heterocosms of Ammons and Ashbery—erudite Lands of Oz. Moreover, Stevens does not share with Ammons and Ashbery that which is most striking in what they share with each other: a profound indifference toward the lived human life. And the human is a curious blindspot, frightening to observe, in poets so honored among their fellows. It is disturbing to think that we have drifted so far from a sense of poetry as a medium of communication and sympathy among persons. Is our cynicism about the possibilities of literature so replete?

Appropriately here I could name poets, "legitimate sons" of Williams, who represent in our time his alternative vision, his active, impassioned engagement of imagination and experience. The poetry of James Wright, Philip Levine, and David Ignatow comes to mind or the earlier work of the heir-apparent in Williams's protest against "academic poetry," the Allen Ginsberg of *Kaddish* and *Howl*. But the pity is that, as I believe, none of our contemporary poets is more abundantly gifted or skilled than A. R. Ammons or John Ashbery. Simply the time has not yet arrived when the best of our poets, in every sense, come down from the studio, out of the backyard, down the steps, into the streets, "to man,/ to Paterson."

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How to Increase Poverty

Stanley Lebergott

I am as poor as Job, my lord, but not so patient.
—Sir John Falstaff

THERE exist at least eight reliable ways to increase poverty. The United States now pursues seven of them. Should it continue to do so, poverty in America will continue. Now it is true that since 1936 the percentage of American families below the official OEO poverty line has been cut, from 56 per cent to less than 10 per cent.* And with our trillion-dollar GNP we have the wherewithal to cut that down to 1 per cent by next Sunday. But it may be impossible to end poverty permanently without changing course on these seven ways. Yet doing so could change American capitalism beyond recognition.

We must begin from a truism: few Americans really want to end poverty. Is that truism contradicted by the strong speech of the young, by the Kennedy-Johnson poverty programs, or by the Nixon welfare program? Consider the following: America could immediately end the blinding poverty of India and Pakistan, if only it chose to do so. How? Rather simply, by dividing up the incomes of the three countries, share and share alike. By that single decisive action we could guarantee those nations against starvation. Naturally, U.S. incomes would have to fall, from about $4,000 a person to $600.† How many Americans are prepared to take this step?

There is an even easier tack. Thousands of Mexicans now drag out their lives in abysmal poverty. The U.S. could change that, and without giving away a single cent, merely by letting the poorest Mexicans enter the U.S. and earn higher incomes. How many Americans are ready to do so? In 1959 a major church synod called on its "members to pray and work . . . [to] eliminate blighting poverty." One particular prayer they proposed was for an "annual reduction of the number of Mexican nationals imported for agricultural labor." Michael Harrington, champion of "The Other America," has quoted approvingly the fierce opposition by a Mexican-American trade unionist to taking any such anti-poverty step. Yet our 19th-century experience strongly suggests that conditions for many immigrants could be improved, with little or no unemployment, at the price of slowing the rise in U.S. wage rates.

I suggest, therefore, that most Americans are not interested in abolishing poverty, particularly the coarse and untidy kind that leads to agony, to starvation, and to death. Their concern is instead: can poverty *in America* be abolished? But what is "poverty in America"? Few of those who exhort on that subject can mean by poverty too small an income for a family to buy enough calories and vitamins, plus a place to live, heat and water, some clothing and medical care. For the typical *poverty* family today can buy as much food as the *average* U.S. worker could buy in our grandparents' time—plus better housing, more clothing, furniture, heat, and medical care.

Sensitive Americans are therefore exercised about something quite beyond ending starvation, providing a place to live, medical care, etc. They are measuring not by any absolute standard, but by a relative one. Poverty is what afflicts Americans who fall behind today's here-and-now standard of living. As Harrington puts it: "The American poor are not poor . . . in the 16th century; they are poor here and now in the United States. They are dispossessed in terms of what the rest of the nation enjoys. . . .They watch the movies and read the magazines of affluent Americans, and these tell them that they are internal exiles. . . ." In an economy that bursts with productivity, that produces so fantastic a volume and variety of goods, poverty comes to be defined as relative to what the typical American enjoys.

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*Taking the official poverty line of $4,275 in 1972 prices as equivalent to $1,250 in 1935–36, and utilizing data from National Resources Planning Board *Family Expenditures in the United States*, one can estimate 56 per cent of American families below that figure in 1935–36.

†The U.S., of course, cannot lay sole claim to such bias. Kuwait's per-capita income is more than ten times as great as Jordan's. Japan's is almost twenty times as great as Indonesia's.

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1. THE FIRST way to increase poverty in the United States follows fairly obviously from that definition—namely, to increase the standard of living. Raise the consumption level of the typical American and you create poverty. Raise it again and you create more poverty. When Ford invented the auto he created poverty. When Zworykin invented TV he created more poverty. Raise the standard decade after decade and you create more and more (relative) poverty even while you are wiping out the old-fashioned (starvation) kind of poverty. "Solely as a result of growing affluence, a society will elevate its notions of what constitutes poverty." (So reports the President's Commission on Income Maintenance.)

Try as hard as it can, a nation cannot succeed in creating relative poverty unless it does three things:

a) It must use its workers more and more productively. And we know that American capitalism has become more productive with every passing decade.

b) It must pay those workers more and more. And we know the real wage of American workers has tripled since 1900.

c) Finally, it must prevent its workers from relapsing into the expenditure pattern of St. Simeon Stylites, or even of Thoreau. If American workers had devoted their increased incomes to the worship of God and nature, the "relative deprivation" kind of poverty could not have arisen.

But when higher wages are earned, and then devoted to raising the workers' standard of living, more poverty is produced. The narrow-visioned worker of 1900 might have been satisfied to ride a trolley to work. But his grandson—even his hippie grandson—requires a car or motorcycle. (Indeed, 41 per cent of our officially "poor" families own automobiles. Half-a-million own more than one car.) The 1900 housewife used a tin washboard. The 1975 housewife requires an electric washing machine and dryer (in the local laundromat or at home).

In 1900 15 per cent of U.S. families had flush toilets; today 86 per cent of our poor families do. In 1900 3 per cent had electricity; today 99 per cent of our poor do. In 1900 1 per cent had central heating; today 62 per cent of the poor do. In 1900 18 per cent of our families had refrigeration, ice refrigeration; today 99 per cent of our poor have refrigerators, virtually all mechanical.

The average American today works a third fewer hours than did his 1900 peer. Yet beyond food, rent, and clothing, his family spends ten times as much on all the other comforts and necessities of life as did the 1900 family (allowing for price change).

These spectacular increases could not, I would argue, have been achieved without heroic contributions by Madison Avenue. Keeping up with the Joneses—as they keep up with the TV ads—has become our normal way of life. Spirit and salesmanship, greed plus gab, produce a distinctive, an American, perspective. It was, after all, two American Marxists, Paul Baran and Paul Sweezy, who classified as poor those American families who could not regularly buy cans of "room air freshener."* What homage to the advertising profession! What testimony to its success in expanding the American standard of necessity! Another American Marxist, Howard Sherman, has written a text on *Radical Political Economy* which devotes several pages to the $11-billion-yearly "waste" in "useless automobile model changes," excoriating such "fraudulent and trivial newness." But just as we nod in agreement, he goes on to define poverty, and he stipulates $5,900 a year as a "low absolute level of income"—in part because workers with such an income must "run a used car or use public transport." How terribly vulgar the used car. And how unfortunate those $10,000-income families who do not drive cars just off the showroom floor.

All this is not meant to ignore the ancient, decisive, and ubiquitous presence of envy. Long before the U.S. even existed, La Bruyère observed of another culture: "Life is brief and monotonous. It passes away in desire."

But surely one inference follows. If American industry speeds productivity and pays higher wages, and if advertising helps persuade American workers to buy new, more elegant products, then American capitalism must continue to generate poverty.

The upward trend in the reference standard makes the end of poverty an ever-retreating goal, and an unachievable one. Such a trend is assumed by the major radical thinkers as well as by the liberal ones. Thus Lassalle's "iron and inexorable law" of wages, when read closely, proves to be a complete tautology: "The iron and inexorable law, according to which, under the domination of supply and demand, the average wages of labor remain always reduced to the bare subsistence which, according to the standard of living of a nation, is necessary for the maintenance of life and the reproduction of the species." "Iron and inexorable law," "bare subsistence"—these clamorous and menacing phrases all push into insignificance the proviso, "according to the standard of living of a nation." But that tiny proviso renders meaningless the fearful threat of life on

*Paul Baran and Paul Sweezy, *Monopoly Capital* (1966), pp. 288–89. They define poverty "as the condition in which those members of a society live whose incomes are insufficient to cover what is for that society and at that time the subsistence minimum." All, therefore, turns on the definition of the subsistence minimum. Baran and Sweezy equate it with the Bureau of Labor Statistics' "modest but adequate" budget. Examination of the BLS budget indicates that it includes the air freshener, replacement of a car at frequent intervals, and a variety of other items which are of interest since they are not incorporated in the standard of living of many persons with considerably higher money incomes.

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bread and water. For what determines that "standard of living"? Lassalle offers us no system for determining which forces are at work, or how important any of them may be. That is equally true of official Marxism-Leninism, which gives the game away by admitting that "the standard" rises during the course of development.*

If we were discussing an economy where productivity and incomes never advanced, no such conclusion would follow. But the income of the American common man promises to continue advancing. Or if we imagined the unimaginable—a whole society rejecting the rising consumption of goods as a goal of life—no such conclusions would follow. But can we imagine this society agreeing with Thomas à Kempis that "Whatever . . . is essential to my peace cannot be the production of the world"? Those who have seen America's poor families go from 0 per cent with television to nearly 90 per cent in two decades, the nonmaterialistic young go from 2 per cent (?) consuming moderately expensive marijuana cigarettes to 30 per cent (?) in two decades, or from buying 50 million phonograph records a year to 200 million-plus stereo sets, airplane rides, etc., would hardly anticipate any such unbelievable turnabout. "The poor ye have always with you," therefore, seems a continuing description of American capitalism.

2. A SECOND way to increase poverty is to allow older people to live apart from their children. Perhaps young people today enjoy such close rapport with their parents that they wish to spend their entire lives with them. But an older generation had no such aspiration. The passage of the Social Security Act in 1936 began the process by which the state gave older people pensions which they could spend as they chose. Many of them promptly decided to live apart from their children: they valued their privacy and comfort. (So did their children and grandchildren.) But this move automatically increased the number of poverty families. And as we continue to allow old people to use their social-security checks for living in homes of their own, we continue to increase the number of poor families. Because when the old folks live with their children they are not in the poverty count (assuming they contribute a mere $601 dollars a year to family income).† But when they decide to live alone they join the poverty count—unless social security gives them three times as much money. The usual discussions of poverty set a zero value on the convenience that older people get from living their own lives (or from grandchildren living with only one set of overbearing oldsters). Hence the poverty estimators treat such expanded horizons and greater independence as increasing poverty.

But even that is not all. Pensions are pegged to the productivity of the economy in the years just before retirement. Suppose a man has been earning $3,000 a year. Over the next ten years the economy's productivity will probably advance by 30 per cent—our long-run trend rate—and average incomes will do much the same. Hence, even if a retiree continues to enjoy *exactly* the same goods and services as today, he will automatically drop below the relative poverty standard—merely because the economy has become more productive.

3. THERE is a third force: the Men's Liberation Front. The male attitude has been tellingly caricatured by V. S. Naipaul in *A Flag on the Island*: "On this island I was telling you about . . . they had this woman, pretty but malevolent. She make two-three children for me, and bam, you know what, she want to rush me into marriage." Our national moral code includes the right of men to propagate children—and desert them. By doing so, of course, they increase poverty: mothers find it difficult to earn any income when they have young children. If they get a job, they must drop their work whenever the children fall ill. They therefore end up with less responsible jobs, at lower wage rates—and are paid for fewer hours. Is it surprising that the percentage of families in poverty rises from 8 per cent when the husband is present, to 32 per cent when he is absent? For white families the rise is from 7 per cent to 26 per cent. For black families the rise is more than 30 percentage points, from 17 per cent to 53 per cent.

It is unclear why Women's Lib has not proposed that men be required to assure, in advance, financial support for any children they may propagate. (That was, of course, one of the reasons for marriage in olden times.) Perhaps the genes of altruism are sex-linked. Or perhaps self-expression is a higher goal than child care. In any event, men remain free to abandon the emotional responsibility to the taxpayers. Nearly 40 per cent of all poor families with heads under sixty-five years would be removed from poverty if Men's Lib were ended.

4. PAYING old people not to work. Before social

* O. S. Kuusinen, *et al., Fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism* (Moscow, 1961): "The magnitude of wages comprises two elements: (a) . . . the means of subsistence that are absolutely necessary for the worker's existence, the maintenance of his ability to work and support his family, and (b) the historical or social [element] which depends on the development of the vital needs and cultural requirements of the working class in a given country." Kuusinen finds that "the movement of wages depends essentially on the class struggle" and that such struggle "can make its position easier."

† Needless to add, not all Americans set a high value on the chance for older people to live where they choose. Indeed, a recent view of "poverty climination" in China reports: "The traditional Chinese family system, under which . . . old people remain within the family unit is also helpful in solving the familiar problem of the isolated, impoverished individual." Cf. Lloyd Reynolds, "China as a Less Developed Economy," *American Economic Review*, June 1975.

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security old people simply had to work. In 1939 40 per cent of men over sixty-five worked. But by 1973 only 24 per cent were at work, though jobs were easier to locate and real wages far more attractive. Why so? It seems likely that the typical worker is quite ready to quit work after forty years of arduous and monotonous labor, and retire on social security. He sets a real value on leisure. But Michael Harrington includes every older worker when he refers to "a misery that extends to 40 or 50 million people in the U.S. . . . that have remained impoverished in spite of increasing productivity and the welfare state." Indeed, those over sixty-five make up the largest single age group in his figure—as they do in most estimates of poverty. But suppose Barry Goldwater had succeeded in abolishing social security. Many older people would still be at work instead of in retirement. Given their years of seniority and skill, they would almost certainly be earning incomes above the poverty level. Hence, because social security induced them to stop working, and live on a lower money income, it induced them to join—indeed, to lead—the ranks of "those who have remained impoverished." But they are not impoverished "in spite of" the American capitalist "welfare state." They are in poverty because of it.

5. RAISING our social standards. In the past many families kept out of poverty by sending their children to work. Senator Ralph Flanders, in *Senator from Vermont*, has described how his father was "bound out" to work without pay. He got only board and room. And his family, of course, received no income. But by reducing the mouths at the table, his work helped to keep the family out of poverty. Our moral standards have advanced mightily since then. In 1900 some 18 per cent of all children (aged ten to fifteen) worked.* Today very few do. We forbid families to use this method of getting out of poverty. We find the moral advance worth the resultant increase in poverty.

Likewise, it used to be possible for a family to increase its income by taking in lodgers. As recently as 1910 some 30 per cent of the millions of foreign-born Americans crowded three (or more) persons into each sleeping room. Some 47 per cent of all Polish immigrants lived under such conditions, and 39 per cent of all Italians. Today's housing codes forbid families to earn incomes by such crowding and doubling up. Indeed, ever stricter enforcement of such codes is urged by every housing and civil-rights organization. Both these codes, and their stricter enforcement, prevent a decline in the number of American families in poverty. Is there an American alive who would want to reduce poverty by challenging these social standards?

6. A SIXTH method for increasing poverty is to keep the children of the poor alive. Every major advance in public-health work and medical care has cut our death rates. Of 100 babies born in 1850 only 64 per cent lived to age twenty-five and went on to form their own families. Today 94 per cent live that long. But the rich already received relatively good care. Hence that tremendous advance surely benefited poor families far more than the rich. Now the poor had their turn. Hence more babies from poor families survived—to be heads of poor families in their turn. Americans rejected, and continue to reject, the older reality in which the death rate kept down the poverty problem.

7. A FINAL force for increasing poverty is fecundity. "Alas," wrote England's Reverend Sydney Smith, of himself, "alas, how easily a priest begets children, and with what difficulty he provides for them." If a $5,000 income is divided among a husband, wife, and two children, they escape the poverty count—either by official government standards or those of the National Welfare Rights Organization. But divide the same income among six children, and they cannot escape.

The faster Americans multiply their family size, and thereby divide their family income, the faster they create poverty. As the number of children per family increases from two to nine or more, the proportion of families in poverty rises from 9 per cent to 40 per cent. (Excluding Aid to Dependent Children would make that rise still greater.) If parents objected to poverty as much as some columnists do, they would never have more than two children per family. There would then be about a million fewer American families in poverty. If Americans adopted the Irish solution after the great famine, they would marry later, expect that each of their fewer children would then be better off. But, as Diderot remarked, "Another child does not concern them: charity will take care of it. And then it is the only pleasure that costs nothing; one consoles oneself during the night for the costs and the calamities of the day."

Our moral and religious principles—Catholic, socialist, black militant—all declare that a man and wife may have any number of children. Hence anyone is free to move his family into the "poverty" group: by adding children. Our value system declares it desirable for the poor to have as many children as they please, however distraught some people may be by the resultant impact on the national poverty totals. Hence, even if every American worker were paid $10,000 a year we would still have poverty—among the families with five, six, or ten children.

*At the end of the 19th century, eight-year-old children ("brickies") worked in brickyards from 5 A.M. until 8 P.M. (*Memorials of Alfred Marshall*, p. 107). The poverty studies would count the loss of this group as a social loss—because they count the decline in incomes but do not allow in any way for the reduction in child labor.

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WHAT may we say in conclusion? That most Americans do not want to abolish poverty because they accept certain moral values.* These include the desirability of not sharing equally with foreigners; the freedom of men to desert their families and of older people to live apart from their children; and the coercive wisdom of the state to forbid persons to double up in their housing, and to forbid children to work.

But even if these attitudes disappeared we could not expect that poverty in America would vanish. For poverty, as defined by either Michael Harrington or by President Nixon's Income Maintenance Commission, is measured by a changing consumption standard. And the central drive of American capitalism involves changing that standard. Our oligopolies make their way by differentiating products: the poptop can replaces thenow-ancient Coke bottle, the refrigerator with ice-cube maker supersedes the one without, the fifth edition of the textbook replaces the fourth. *Rolling Stone* replaces *Colliers*. In competitive makets suppliers similarly jostle for the consumer's dollar. Organic rice and marijuana cigaretes struggle against the conventional kinds, and TV sets against movies. Supermarket variety overcomes small-store affability. Internists and psychoanalysts replace the general practitioner. The ebullient capitalist market process in the U.S. continues to cast up products perceived as more succulent. "If," in Milton's phrase, "all the world should in a pet of temperance feed on pulse, drink the clear stream and nothing wear but frieze," then demand would fail to match this supply. But in the U.S. even Zen Buddhists are capital-intensive meditators and require million-dollar airplanes to transport them to a suitable locus for thought.

Hence, so long as Americans harken to the songs that Madison Avenue sings, judging their well-being by the expenditure of others, and so long as American workers are paid enough so that they can buy more and more "goods," then the inevitable awaits us: the more successfully American capitalism operates, the more surely will poverty remain among us.†

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* An eighth reliable way to increase poverty—a full-scale depression—may be said to run counter to Americans' values.

† It is only fair to add that Communist workers seem as efficient, as productive, and as greedy, as capitalist workers. A Soviet economist recently reported "higher requirements" as more and more Russians discovered a "need to attend movies and theaters, listen to the radio." Moreover, the Soviets have adopted advertising in recent years. The same fate may therefore await Russian Communism as well.

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Pictures of the Jewish Past

Lucy S. Dawidowicz

THOUGH words have always counted for more than pictures in the Jewish tradition, when photography came to Eastern Europe —a bit late, like everything else—the Jews, like everyone else, began to have their pictures taken. The earliest of these photographs are of the high bourgeoisie—the great Jewish bankers of Warsaw and St. Petersburg, the counselors to the Czar, and even some of the more prestigious big-city rabbis and communal leaders, a few of whom sat for the camera as early as the 1860's (though many others, mindful of the biblical prohibition against sculptured images, avoided it for years).* In those early days photographs were strictly for important people on state occasions, but as knowledge of photographic techniques became more widespread, and supplies cheaper and more readily available, young Jews of the middle class who were too status-conscious to do manual labor began taking up photography as a genteel occupation. Soon there were photography studios in most areas with a sizable Jewish population, and middle-class and lower-middle-class Jews too had their pictures taken on important occasions.

Mass immigration to America, beginning in the 1880's—at about the time when photography had first penetrated Jewish social life—further accelerated its diffusion among even the poorest Jews. Families separated from one another for long periods turned increasingly to the new technique as a way of bridging space and time, of compensating in part for the lost presence of husbands or children. There were few Jewish households in Eastern Europe that did not boast a collection of family photographs, prominently displayed, of loved ones who had gone off to America or South Africa. Photographs became the symbol and substance of family solidarity.

With the German occupation of Poland during World War I, photography became mandatory, for every document used for purposes of identification was required to show its bearer's likeness. Weeping and wailing, the hasidic Jews, who had been the last holdouts against the camera's legitimacy and who regarded the German regulation as an evil decree, nonetheless obeyed the law of the land. Even the *rebbes*—heads of the various hasidic dynasties—betook themselves to the local *atelier*, where, tense and anxious, they looked into the camera's evil eye.

Photography among Jews consisted at first mainly of portraiture, for the East European tradition placed little value on the beauties of nature or the outdoors, and Jews for the most part did not own great estates or precious works of art that might lend themselves to preservation on film. Photography as art, photography in the service of science, were not yet Jewish métiers. Early in the 1900's, however, Jews in Eastern Europe began turning to the new technique for purposes of historical and legal documentation. Many pictures are available, for example, of the pogroms of 1905 and 1906—of the wounded, the dying, and the dead, as well as of their grieving families. These were probably taken not only for their news value —the East European press published pictures with some frequency—but also to serve as evidence in the legal case which the Jewish community, as part of a concerted project undertaken by newly-organized self-defense groups, was just then beginning to mount against its persecutors. The camera was also used in this period for quasi-anthropological purposes. In 1912 the Yiddish dramatist S. Ansky, best known as the author of *The Dybuk*, organized a Jewish ethnographic expedition into the Ukraine. Two of its members were able to travel about the Ukrainian hinterlands taking pictures for almost three years—well into the war—before being arrested late in 1914 and charged with spying.

Curiously enough, it was that same German occupation of Poland (from 1915 to 1918) which first revealed the "artistic" possibilities inherent in Jewish subject matter. The Germans came to Poland not only as military conquerors, but also as

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* A stunning photograph of Jacob Gesundheit comes to mind, taken in 1870, when he became rabbi of Warsaw. The rabbi, in a long satin robe with a velvet head covering, sits on an ornate and finely carved high-backed armchair, upholstered in deep plush. He is posed, pen in hand, at a table with a splendidly embroidered damask cloth; several tomes, *seforim*, are at his elbow. It is a photograph that bespeaks the status and prestige of Warsaw's chief rabbi and does honor to the Jewish community.

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tourists, fascinated by the strange people and alien cultures they encountered in the Eastern areas of their conquest. Strangest and most picturesque of all—and hence most photogenic—were the Jews, especially the religiously observant ones, in their long coats and wide-brimmed hats, with their bushy beards and curled sidelocks. No fewer than three picture albums of the city of Vilna—featuring many views of the city's Jewish quarter, its synagogues, and its "types," as the text had it—were published under German auspices during the years of German occupation, and these in turn stimulated a further rash of picture-books about the city when the war was over. The Germans, with the fresh perspective of outsiders, had shown the natives that their town's familiar and commonplace landmarks were worthy of record.

Jewish photographers thenceforth became connoisseurs of beauty, transforming the worn cobblestones of crooked alleys into austere compositions of light and shade, the iron scrollwork of synagogue gates into striking visual arrangements. Imbued with modernist and populist ideas, they turned away from the high and mighty and began training their lenses on more humble subjects: the water carrier, the street musician, the engaging village idiot. Aesthetic considerations merged with a growing social consciousness to attract photographers in increasing numbers to the lower depths of the *shtetl*. Focusing their cameras on the distress and wretchedness that had hitherto been hidden from view, they called public attention to the sufferings of the Jewish poor. (Some of the finest photographs we have from this period were commissioned by a Jewish philanthrophic organization in the United States to spur fund-raising campaigns.) By the late 1920's a number of master photographers of East European Jewish life had emerged: Moritz Grossman (ca. 1885-1941), Menachem Kipnis (1878-1942), Alter Kacyzne (1885-1941), and, most distinguished of all, the noted microphotographer, Roman Vishniac, who was born in St. Petersburg in 1897 and today lives in New York.

By 1939, thousands upon thousands of photographs had accumulated which comprised a documentary history of East European Jewry. Perhaps the best source for this material was the *Jewish Daily Forward* in New York, whose Sunday rotogravure section, begun in 1923, devoted a full page every week to photographs of the old country. Today, the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research has a vast collection of photographs of the Jewish populations of some six hundred cities and towns of pre-war Poland, as well as countless other places in pre-revolutionary Russia. With the German destruction of Jewish Eastern Europe during World War II, these pictures—taken in the course of ordinary human pursuits and for ordinary human purposes—have become the artifacts of a vanished civilization.

CAN photographs succeed at all in rendering East European Jewish life and culture, which were so quintessentially a matter of mind and spirit? East European Jewry had no architectural glories like Greece's, no monumental grandeur like Rome's. Its monuments were wooden synagogues and tombstones; its greatness lay in its human relations, in its moral values and religious commitment, in its abstract intellectuality and the sheer pulsating will to live which animated every aspect of its existence. Can the camera capture such intense inwardness? And even if the inner being of a single individual can be so rendered, can the same thing be done for a group, for a whole community? A number of recently published picture books of Jewish life in Eastern Europe suggest the problems involved in such an enterprise.

Abraham Shulman's *The Old Country: The Lost World of European Jews** illustrates some of the technical difficulties involved. A collection of over two hundred photographs with an introductory essay on the *shtetl* (though in fact a good number of the photographs were taken not in small towns but in the major cities of Warsaw, Lublin, Lodz, Odessa, and Vilna), the book's contents are drawn entirely from the old *Forward* rotogravure section, where they were published during the last three decades. These rescreened, "second-generation" reproductions have darkened considerably, losing much of their original clarity. The resulting lack of definition has been further aggravated by having both photographs and text printed in brown rather than black ink. The sky in these pictures is always overcast, the subject of the photographs is half-hidden in darkness, and the pictures are oppressively melancholy and monotonous.

Turning the pages, and growing more and more depressed, one realizes, however, that the flaw is not merely technical. The pictures seem to have been chosen to gratify the most self-flagellating kind of nostalgia, enshrining that stereotype of the East European *shtetl* which I have characterized (in *The Golden Tradition*) as "forever frozen in utter piety and utter poverty." Picture after picture conveys the same sense of unrelieved deprivation: the outdoors is endlessly signified by muddy stretches of unpaved road or cobbled pavements; the dimly lit interiors transmit a sense of imprisonment. The pictures also exude an air of vagueness and unreality, further compounded by the author's failure to identify most of them as to specific time or place—as though all these streets and houses were the same and therefore interchangeable. This view of East European Jewry is simply too lopsided to pass for history.

To take just one example: there is a single photograph in the present collection which is identified as being from Cracow. In this ancient and

* Scribners, 210 pp., $12.95.

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beautiful capital of the historic kingdom of Poland, some 25,000 Jews lived at the turn of the century, when the city was part of the Hapsburg empire. During that period, Jewish representatives sat in the Austrian Reichsrat, Jews served in the city's chamber of commerce, and Jewish professors taught at the university. Jewish Cracow, moreover, was a center of the modernist Hebrew revival. Yet all that Shulman shows us of Cracow is a photograph of two barefoot children pumping water from a town well. His book conveys neither the immense diversity nor the striking wholeness of East European Jewish culture—capable as it was of tolerating and finally reconciling within itself the most violently opposed cultural impulses. (One need only recall the great struggles between traditionalism and modernity, between Zionism and anti-Zionism, between Hasidism and rabbinic Judaism.) None of this ferment is evident in Shulman's book.

A MORE ambitious and professional work is *The Jewish Family Album: The Life of a People in Photographs,* by Franz Hubmann,* an Austrian photographer who has previously done pictorial histories of the Hapsburg and Wilhelminian empires. The book consists of over 300 photographs which have been assembled from a great variety of state, public, private, and communal archives in Austria, Germany, Czechoslovakia, France, England, the United States, and Israel. It is not limited to Eastern Europe, but attempts a panoramic presentation of Jewish life in modern times; accordingly, it is divided (rather unevenly) into four sections: East European Jewry (mistitled "Ghetto and Shtetl"); West European Jewry ("The Emancipated"); American Jewry ("The New World"); and pre-1939 Palestine ("The Promised Land"). A ten-page history of the Jews plus short introductions to each of the four sections (by Miriam and Lionel Kochan) complete the somewhat procrustean organization.

Aesthetically, the volume is flawless. The large-size format is pleasing, the quality of reproduction and printing is first-rate, the original values of clarity, distinctness, sharpness, and contrast have been marvelously preserved, and perhaps even enhanced in the black-and-white plates. The layout is spacious and at times even elegant, and the pictures are more varied and more interesting than those in Shulman's volume.

Hubmann, too, sees the Jews of Eastern Europe as mainly poor and pious, though they are not so wretched and depressed as Shulman's. There is a rather heavy concentration on pictures of Galician towns, many taken during World War I, and Eastern Poland by contrast is rather sparsely represented, though four plates of wooden synagogues —one exterior and three interiors—are impressive. The Jews of Eastern Europe are shown for the most part in the course of their daily pursuits—at work, in conversation, in religious study, and in the war zone. Perhaps the most interesting single photograph, from the point of view of social history, is one of a Galician family at the Seder table in 1915. There are eight at the table, which is set, as the camera reveals, according to Passover specifications: the festive cloth, the candlesticks, the ceremonial plate, the wine, the matzos, the *haggadot,* the dishes, and the holiday cutlery. More interesting than these, however, are the two uniformed soldiers of the Austrian Imperial Army seated at either end of the table. One wonders who they are. Family members home on furlough for the Passover holidays? Out-of-town Jews stationed in the town and invited to share in local hospitality? Like a number of other pictures in this section, this one lingers in the mind.

Yet for all the charm, interest, and character of the 60-odd pictures which make up this section, it is inadequate as a portrayal of the social diversity of the teeming Jewish community of Eastern Europe. But perhaps, indeed, such a portrayal was not intended, for Hubmann's perspective on his material seems to have been shaped entirely by one cliché of Jewish sociology: the contrast between the poor and pious Jews of Eastern Europe and the affluent, emancipated Jews of Western Europe. (The section on America, too, follows through on this basic scheme, with the pictures neatly divided between humble East European immigrants and rich German Jews). The particular dichotomy here is a very orderly one, but it is no less a stereotype than Shulman's, and perhaps even more distorting.

In any case, "The Emancipated" dominate the entire album, with two or three times as many entries as any other category. The ambiguities of this section, one might say, begin with the title itself, for it is never quite clear whether it is civic inequality or Judaism from which these Jews have been emancipated; the inclusion of a number of converts from Judaism only adds to the puzzlement. Those whom Hubmann has chosen to typify as the community of Western Europe include philanthropists like Sir Moses Montefiore and Baron de Hirsch, statesmen like Benjamin Disraeli, and members of the great Jewish banking families of Central and Western Europe like Todesco, Wertheimer, Rothschild, Schey-Koromla, Péreire, Camondo, and Sassoon—to name just the most outstanding. From the world of culture and entertainment the list is even longer, and contains in addition to Jews a good number of ex-Jews and at least one bona-fide Gentile—Johann Strauss the Younger, a non-Jew even according to the Nuremberg Laws. Interspersed among these photographs of such stars as Gustave Mahler and Arthur Schnitzler, Arnold Schoenberg and Sarah Bernhardt, Marc Chagall and Franz Kafka, Gertrude Stein and Ernst Lubitsch, are also a few run-of-the-mill assimilated German Jews as well as a scat-

* Little, Brown and Company, 318 pp., $24.95.

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tering of lower-class Prague Jews and hasidim living in Vienna's Leopoldstadt—included, one cannot but feel, to point a contrast to the luminaries.

Shulman shows us the Jews as poor and downtrodden; Hubmann, as prosperous and triumphant. Both volumes distort reality in one way or another. Are we to conclude that picture books simply cannot render the institutions, values, traditions, and culture of the Jewish community? Are these simply too elusive to be captured by the eye of the camera?

A THIRD work, *Jerusalem of Lithuania,** a beautiful photographic history of Jewish Vilna, demonstrates that an authentic Jewish pictorial history is indeed possible, though this particular one was twenty-five years in preparation, required the services of dozens of devoted volunteers in addition to the editor, Vilna-born Leyzer Ran, and takes up three massive volumes. There have been hundreds of *yizkor* (remembrance) books to memorialize communities which perished in the Holocaust, but none to equal the present work in scope and profusion of detail, extending as it does from the earliest settlement for which visual documentation was available, to the final extinction of the Vilna Jewish community. Volumes I and II—folio-size and bound in red cloth—contain over 3,000 reproductions of photographs, paintings, illustrations, documents, maps, and tables, a selection garnered from communal and private collections all over the world. Volume III, octavo and paperbound, contains indices to 1,500 subjects and 4,000 persons, an exhaustive multilingual bibliography on the history of Jewish Vilna, and a listing of picture sources. The several introductory essays and all of the captions are in Yiddish, Russian, English, and Hebrew.

The Vilna immortalized here occupied a unique position among Jewish cities. Though lacking the energy and bustle of Warsaw, Odessa's cosmopolitanism, Lodz's enterprise, or Cracow's elegance, it was indeed—as Napoleon is supposed to have exclaimed on first seeing Vilna's Great Synagogue in 1812—the "Jerusalem of Lithuania." With a Jewish population in the 19th century that fluctuated between sixty and one-hundred thousand —comprising about a third of the total population—Vilna was a center, and often a pioneering outpost, of every major Jewish cultural and social movement. It was the home of the most celebrated Talmudist of modern times, Elijah ben Solomon (the Vilna Gaon), and hence the most authoritative locus of rabbinic Judaism. It was the cultural seat of the Haskalah and of the revival of Hebrew literature, and was also home to the proto-Zionist movement, Hovevei Zion ("Lovers of Zion"). The Jewish socialist movement was born in Vilna and the Jewish Labor Bund held its founding conference there in 1897. The Romm Hebrew printing and publishing house, whose editions of the Talmud were renowned throughout the world, flourished in Vilna for 150 years, and the fame of Vilna's *yeshivot* matched the repute of its secular Hebrew and Yiddish teachers' seminaries. Along with all this went a great profusion of newspapers, magazines, and journals of every conceivable kind, most of them in Yiddish, for Yiddish was the language of Jewish Vilna, both of its marketplace and of its high literary and scholarly culture.

Small wonder, then, that the story of this city should have taken so many pages to tell. The first volume of *Jerusalem of Lithuania* opens with reproductions of 15th-century documents and of a 1606 woodcut showing Vilna's main Jewish street and synagogue. The second volume closes with photographs of the destruction of Vilna Jewry and of the war-crimes trials of the Germans responsible for that destruction. Between the spare beginning and the irreversible end, the editor and his colleagues have given us a stunning profusion of pictures in which every facet of Lithuanian Jerusalem is captured and preserved.

Is the reader interested in Vilna's political life? An 1869 photograph shows ten members of a Vilna Jewish commission appointed by the Czarist government and headed by Vilna's eminent Chief Rabbi, Jacob Barit; a 1906 photograph shows the Jewish electors for the first Russian Duma; and there is a whole series of individual and group portraits of Vilna's representatives in the *Sejm*, the city council, and the Kehilla, as well as of the leaders and members of Vilna's countless political movements, caught in turbulent street demonstrations, with flags and banners aloft, or stiffly posed before the camera.

Is the reader interested in Vilna's communal institutions? There is a fascinating series of pictures of an old-age home, with its residents in both formal and informal poses, and another series on communal health facilities, ranging from the traditional bath house and the *hevrat bikur holim* (society to visit the sick) to the most modern of hospitals and clinics. My own favorite, in the section on philanthropic activities and societies, is a marvelously detailed portrait of one Deborah Esther Gelfer (1817-1907), a charitable dowager, obviously ill-at-ease before the camera, who sits clutching the tie-string bag from which she habitually doled out gifts and loans to the needy. (A later photograph, posed before her rather ostentatious gravestone, shows a man reciting the prayer for the dead to an assemblage of heavily shawled women—perhaps Madame Gelfer's beneficiaries, feeling the pinch of her demise.)

So far as Vilna's economic life is concerned, there are copious illustrations of street trade and town markets and examples of mercantile enterprise ranging from second-hand dealers to Zalkind's sumptuous department store. The water-car-

* Privately published by the Vilna Album Committee, New York, 1974; 3 vols., 540 + 470 pp. + Index, $40.00. Available by mail from the publisher at 34-40 93rd Street, Jackson Heights, New York, 11372.

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riers and wood-cutters of *shtetl* mythology are here, but so also are the tailors, carpenters, glaziers, smiths, painters, upholsterers, porters and drivers, tanners, mechanics, bookbinders, bakers and brewers, as well as men at work on lumber rafts, in plywood factories, and in pulp mills. A 1913 photograph of a Vilna beggar out-beggars all the wretched Jews in Shulman's collection, and contrasts with the complacent portraits of Jewish factory owners and members of manufacturers' associations. (An accompanying table informs us that two-thirds of Vilna's industrial enterprises and 60 per cent of its comercial businesses were Jewish-owned.)

Finally, there is Vilna's academic and cultural life, with an array of photographs of *yeshivot* and secular schools, of children in the classroom and at play, of athletic contests and scholarly activities all the way from kindergarten to *gymnasium*; Vilna's cultural elite are also pictured here—its scholars and intellectuals, poets, journalists, cantors, composers conductors, musicians, opera stars, child prodigies, dancers, actors (the famed Vilna Troupe), painters, and sculptors.

All of Jewish Vilna, in short, is in these pages, and also everyone of note who ever visited the city: there is a splendid photograph of Theodor Herzl seated in a *droshky*, with the driver standing at attention like a royal guardsman, and there are pictures of such other distinguished visitors as the Zionist leaders Nahum Sokolow and Vladimir Jabotinsky, the Yiddish classicists Mendele, Sholem Aleichem, and I. L. Peretz, the poet Chaim Nachman Bialik, the historian Simon Dubnow, and the novelist Sholem Asch.

Turning the pages of *Jerusalem of Lithuania* one has the illusion of looking through a kaleidoscope, or watching a kind of slow-motion film. But then one comes, perforce, to the last section—the war, the German occupation, the ghetto, the killings, and the killers. One cannot go on turning these pages, so one goes back, to an earlier place, to a point where the 60,000 Jews of Vilna were still alive, and starts all over again from there.

The Jews of Vilna are gone now, missing from its pictured streets, ". . . pressing their vacancy/ Against the walls . . ." as Irving Feldman puts it in his haunting poem, "To the Six Million." But in *Jerusalem of Lithuania* Mr. Ran has given them a ghostly reincarnation, a life eternal in pictorial history. In place of the mere nostalgia which *The Old Country* and *The Jewish Family Album* are designed to invoke, we have here the true gift of historical remembrance.

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Watching the Sit-Coms

Dorothy Rabinowitz

Amos n' Andy are long gone, but changing tastes, increased sophistication, and the jading plenitude that television has provided over the years seem in no way to have altered the capacity of American audiences to be held in thrall, week after week, by "shows." The shows Americans have liked the most recently have been staples of CBS television, the Saturday-night "situation comedies," as irrelevant a term for these programs as can have been invented. For it is not for anything as bland as the name implies that the Saturday night sit-coms have consistently drawn the highest Nielsen ratings. Comprising four half-hour segments, *All in the Family, The Jeffersons, The Mary Tyler Moore Show,* and *The Bob Newhart Show,* the Saturday night sit-coms have more often than not supplied fare of a kind quite remarkable in the annals of commercial television. The departure this season of *All in the Family,* the most popular of them all, from Saturday night to Monday night offers as good an occasion as any for reflecting on the world of the sit-coms and their audience.

One begins by taking *All in the Family* (a Lear-Yorkin Production) for what it is, a weekly repository of our most fashionable pieties. The series is set in a lower-middle-class neighborhood, its backdrop a lace-curtained, depressed, but impeccable two-story house of the kind one might find in working-class sections of Queens or Bay Ridge, Brooklyn. The head of the household, as everyone knows, is Archie Bunker, a bigot, an enemy of progress and of progressive thinkers of every stripe; a hardhat in short and in fact, Archie's employment being, vaguely, in the construction line. Ostensibly a member of the Wasp majority, albeit of its lower classes, Archie is hostile to blacks, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Catholics, atheists, homosexuals, and women's liberationists. Not that his crude assaults on these targets go unopposed, for his household is illuminated by the presence of a militantly progressive daughter and son-in-law (the latter, to be sure, something of a sponger and a hothead), both of whom spring smartly into action whenever Archie opens his mouth.

An extraordinary number of words have been written about, and objections entered to, the "bigotry" of *All in the Family.* Civil-rights leaders have charged that the show disseminates racially and religiously biased attitudes, despite its clearly stated hostility to Archie's prejudices. Women's groups complain about the part of Edith, Archie's wife, a goodhearted but muddle-headed woman whom her husband refers to regularly as "the dingbat," and who accepts the role of loving servant to her husband. Nothing if not aware of these objections, the producers, writers, and directors of *All in the Family* have gone to great lengths to establish *all* of Archie's contentions as bigotry, up to and including his notion that black criminals might be a threat to one's life. Indeed, there is but one figure on whom the show's satire ranges entirely free and unselfconscious, and that figure is Archie himself and, by extension, the hardhat type in general, a target of satire that has inspired more than one progressive sensibility since the days when construction workers fought student radicals in the street, and aligned themselves on the side of the President.

The first aim of this satire, it would appear, is to explode the myth of hardhat virility. Did you think that those strong, inarticulate louts were comfortable with their animal natures? You couldn't be more wrong. Archie's sexual life is limited by inhibition and narrowness, as witness his discomfort when his wife proposes they return to their honeymoon hotel for a twenty-fifth wedding anniversary. Archie is, furthermore, a blusterer and an ignoramus, who can get out no idiom but that it is mangled, no proverb but that it is turned upside down, no word of more than two syllables but that it is mispronounced. (Many of these manglings and mispronunciations are reminiscent indeed of the black-face violence perpetrated on the King's English by Amos n' Andy, back in that unenlightened past which is now to the enlightened an embarrassment to recall: "Wait a minute heah Andy! Whut is you doin? Is you mulsiflyin or revidin?") Archie is also a World War II veteran, a factor integral to his status as a reactionary. He has only to narrow his small blue eyes at his peace-marching son-in-law and deliver a prideful reference to "double-yew double-yew two" in order to induce laughter from a studio audience that *knows* how the failures of our past, of our elders, of everything we have become are inextricably linked with the proto-fascist type of the veteran.

Archie is not the only reactionary visible on *All in the Family.* Before their promotion to a series of their own, Archie's black neighbors, the Jeffersons, included in their long-suffering family circle a bigot almost as impossible as Archie, but one whose hatreds were directed against whites. This effort at balance aside, *All in the Family*'s portrayal of blacks has reflected with some precision what the outer limits of comment are thought to be on that subject. The theme of black crime is particularly pertinent. In one episode, Archie confronts two black robbers, as verbal, elegant, and full of graceful effrontery as Archie is gauche and inarticulate. In addition to being cleverer

Dorothy Rabinowitz, *a frequent contributor, is completing a book about Holocaust survivors living in America.*

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than he (Archie has foolishly put his faith in a gun, while they rely on those typical weapons of the urban criminal, wit and cerebration), they are models of sensitivity—they indulge Edith's off-key singing, force Archie to be nice to her, and generally comport themselves like ambassadors to the Court of St. James. Elsewhere, Norman Lear, the "developer" of *All in the Family*, has developed other avenues for the treatment of this issue, notably in his black-family "spin-offs," whole series created around characters first established in other shows. In the immensely successful *Good Times*, shown on Tuesday evenings, a ghetto family comes to grips with black crime on several occasions, once in an episode during which the lovable teen-ager J.J. is forced to take part in a gang war against his will, and again when a black—and blind—salesman is presented as a bunko artist, an unscrupulous robber of poor ghetto dwellers and, the young militant of the family gives us to understand, of his own people.

"His own people" is the reassuring factor here. Lear's programs endorse the liberal answer to the high rate of black crime, the proposition that blacks are its chief victims. In addition, in all three of Lear's black-family programs—*The Jeffersons*, *Good Times*, and *Sanford and Son*—blacks alone pass judgment on black problems and on black attitudes in general. This enables a modest spirit of self-criticism to seem to prevail on these shows. On *The Jeffersons*, an upwardly-mobile anti-white George Jefferson is balanced off against his wife, Louise, who is sanity and moderation itself. In one episode, George Jefferson and his son Lionel shower contempt upon Louise's elderly uncle, a retired butler whom they berate for having spent his life as an Uncle Tom in a white household and for being, clearly, an activist of the NAACP variety. "Listen, you!" the dignified older man finally roars at Lionel, "I used to spit out six like you before breakfast!" "I worked for many years to get from nigger to Negro, so you'll have to forgive me if it takes me a while to get used to calling myself a black now," the uncle concludes, with hauteur, to shrieks of applause from the audience for this defiance of the new by the old.

For airing sentiments like these, the producer of *All in the Family* has made a not inconsiderable name for himself as an entrepreneur of the controversial. On *All in the Family* alone, such subjects as menopause, miscarriage, and menstruation have all been dealt with, if with the somewhat reverent air that inevitably seems to accompany the principle that all things having to do with our bodies are sacred. Next season, it is promised that *All in the Family* will venture a program on euthanasia. The decision to treat that theme was made, according to a New York *Times* piece, at what was presumably a typical conference between Lear and his story editor. "Can we find a way to do it without copping out?" Lear asks. "Maybe we can have the relatives agree to it and let the audience know they're not sure they made the right decision." It would appear that among "controversial" and pioneering types in the media, of whom Lear is so egregious an example, "no copping out" means that within the format of a show dealing with a morally questionable course of action, the principals decide *for* the action and carry it through; taking the negative side would be equivalent to "copping out." One of the possibilities that Lear and his fellow controversialists seem not ready to contemplate is the notion that moral courage might be more greatly manifested in a decision to defy, or even to ignore, some piece or other of the conventional wisdom.

Yet "controversial" themes have little, if anything, to do with the wide success of *All in the Family*. Its appeal is rooted not in the show's endorsement of liberal values, but, on the contrary, in its vivid, visual demonstration of the abiding attractiveness of the familiar as opposed to the strange, the old virtues as opposed to the new nonsense. The writers who write the show, the actors who act in it, not to say the developer who develops and produces it, are all aware of the rule for success that politicians of every kind, including those in the entertainment business, understand very well—that it is easier to win by reassuring people than by trying to convert them. No matter how much "controversial" material *All in the Family* purveys, or how many progressive positions it endorses—no matter how many women get jobs in the construction firm Archie works for, or how many fine, manly homosexuals are trotted out for Archie's education—it is the fate of all of them to be rendered meaningless by reason of the show's main dramatic energies, which are bent precisely on establishing the irrelevance of the new and the progressive to the life and style of the lovable Bunkers: a life and style, we are given to understand, that are full of decency and worth.

LEAR is not the first politician of his age to have read correctly the prevailing winds of the culture and to have perceived the wisdom in following *all* of them, though he may well be the first to have packaged that perception successfully for television. Nor is the package a small achievement, for there have been scenes on *All in the Family* equal to the best that commercial television has had to offer, most of them due to the skill of Carroll O'Connor, who plays Archie with a fidelity that has been the making of the show since its inception in 1971. To see Carroll O'Connor act this part is to have the pleasure of watching knowledge delivered. With his mastery of every inflection, every lift of the eyebrow, of a certain lower-middle-class type, O'Connor succeeds, in the face of all that rings false in Archie's lines, in making that which he knows so well, and which we, watching, know that he knows so well—namely, details—prevail over stereotype and caricature.

In one program, to cite but a single instance, Archie learns from his rich, despised, and much envied cousin Russell that Russell, a swinger, betrays his wife regularly. An appalled Archie sits in a bar and listens to Russell's cold-blooded talk about how uninteresting wives are sexually. At home, in a tearful scene, Archie's wife Edith (Jean Stapleton) is hearing the same sort of information concerning Russell from Russell's wife, a woman whose marriage the goodhearted Edith has always admired for its surface glamor. But when the cousins have

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gone home and Archie and Edith are alone, they cannot bring themselves to talk about what they have found out about the other couple. The camera zeroes in on the mute Archie and Edith, drawn close, suddenly, by an inexplicable current of feeling risen between them: on, particularly, the face of Archie, capably feigning indifference.

It is one of television's better moments, not only because the audience recognizes the truth of this silence—its legitimate observation of the way in which, except perhaps among the sophisticated, each sex still tends to reserve to itself what, for its own good reasons, it is judged the other need not know—or because the observation itself is an appealing one, but also because, in a medium whose chief terror has traditionally been any assay into the subtle, a highly condensed piece of shorthand has been permitted to stand without explication. Audiences have rightly perceived at such moments that in the "new breed" of situation comedy, they are indeed given something not accorded them on traditional programs. In the new programs writers and performers are not so much required to sustain a plot line—as is the case in more traditional shows—as to render social types, to satirize rather than to tell a story. It is required of the audience, in turn, that it know enough to recognize the types, that it follow the actors' shorthand, and that it become, in some measure, their partner and ally—for it is true of any successful satire that it makes its audience a satirist by extension.

Thus, *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, by far the most sophisticated of the sit-coms, requires that its audience recognize the puffery that goes into television news programs, enough at least to understand the character of Ted Baxter. The character of the silvery-haired Baxter is based on a type supposedly to be found in every newsroom in America: the newscaster hired entirely for the sake of his telegenic face, a vain, empty-headed show-business type with no comprehension whatsoever of the news he reads in so portentous and convincing a tone. Ted knows that the only real news of consequence is his popularity ratings; even his honest and irascible producer, Lou Grant, in some degree shares this naively cynical attitude.

But if this sounds as if *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* is devoted to making "political" observations about life, the heart of the show is in fact elsewhere, try though its writers will, almost always unsuccessfully, to deal with such important "issues" as bigotry or women's rights. In one segment, the station-manager's wife decides, in the interest, vaguely, of "finding herself," to leave her husband and begin a new life alone, despite the fact that her marriage is an excellent one, and that she loves her husband deeply. This decision is a puzzle to her husband, and, it would seem, to the writers of the show as well, whose tortured efforts to make sense of it introduce a challenge greater than they are up to. The segment crawls to an end, finally, with the spectacle of the wife going out to hunt herself up, with none of the characters, least of all the departing wife, given a line that might impart a moment's conviction to the scene. The writers have, in their way here, made a discovery of the kind George Orwell recommended in "Politics and the English Language": in order to translate its meaning into activity they had to strip a politicized statement of its rhetoric, and they found themselves left with nothing.

DEDICATED at its best, then, to satire and portraiture rather than to debate, *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* concentrates its energies on rendering urban types, all of whom have their share of neurotic tendencies. The targets of their satire are the postures and compulsions of the workaday consciousness. Lou Grant (Edward Asner), the producer, in broad outline a tough, straightforward newsroom type, speaks, within that "straight" portraiture, to the complicated, the inward, the quirky, the psychological. Mary Richards, the heroine, wages a continual war on her inhibitions, and a very contemporary war it is. A nice girl to the bone, gracious, well-bred, fair, and unwilling to offend, she has nevertheless absorbed the intelligence of an age which calls all her values into doubt, which instructs her to cast inhibition aside, and learn to be, among other things, aggressive, or be guilty of that worst of contemporary sins, the failure of self-fulfillment.

In sum, one of the reasons for the great appeal of *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* lies in its use of material that is as true a mirror of the preoccupations of our private lives as *All in the Family*'s progressive issues are a false one. That material is primarily "relationships"—the very matter of the show, the action itself. When Mary's Jewish girl friend, Rhoda, left the series, having been given a spin-off of her own, there was a considerable drop for a time in its pace and content, so much did the relationship between them carry the show. In addition to relationships, and in contrast to the sentimental *All in the Family*, which, in the oldest tradition of radio and television, illustrates the superiority of home and hearth over adventure, of the simple life over the grand, *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* also deals with the delights of success, the energy of ambition, the pleasures of competition. And ambition is a ruling passion as well on *The Bob Newhart Show* (another Mary Tyler Moore Production), a program in which psychologists, urologists, dentists, and teachers all race about, testaments to the joy of professional life and to success.

Not surprisingly, there is comfort as well as fun in these comedies, which acknowledge that, in the service of ambition, in the operation of their most intimate relationships, all kinds of fine people are full of neurotic hungers, lying impulses, and shoddy vanities. Not only are the people in them successful, thereby proving that neurotic hunger and pretense might in fact function in a good cause, but they are appealing and wholesome as well. Rarely in popular entertainment, in fact, have the negative aspects of character played so heroic a role as in the sit-coms, *All in the Family* included. No wonder that we welcome them, that we are sorry when they end, for besides entertaining us, the sit-coms tell us what we had hoped all along was true: that it is *for* our faults we are loved, really, not in spite of them.

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Christian Theology and the Holocaust

Frank Talmage

WITHIN a year of the liberation of France from the Nazis, a book appeared in Paris by a prominent Catholic theologian expressing his abhorrence of anti-Semitism. Charles Journet, having witnessed the virtually limitless power of Jew-hatred, was determined that it no longer be perpetuated by Christians or in the name of Christianity. Yet Journet's attempt to reject anti-Semitism while at the same time maintaining a traditional Christian theology, with its traditional anti-Jewish elements, led him into an unresolved and unresolvable dialectic. One passage in his *Destinées d'Israël* makes this clear. Journet took issue with the Jewish historian Joseph Klausner, who had wondered which was worse: death by persecution or death by a kiss (conversion). In the face of the Holocaust, Journet confidently argued, there could be little doubt concerning the answer. This was especially true because "death" by conversion was in fact rebirth into a new life, in which Israel—disencumbered of its old Law—could fulfill its true destiny. On the other hand, he conceded, the Jewish people might, if it insisted, establish itself in its ancient homeland. Indeed, as a philo-Semite, Journet was bound to support such a venture. But what the Church Fathers had reiterated remained true: this people, after Christ, was no longer a people at all, but an aggregate of individuals who merely gave the appearance of being a people.

In 1945, then, the ancient nominalist-realist debate was still to be heard in Paris. In the same vein, Jacques Maritain was to be a most outspoken advocate of Zionism and later of the State of Israel, yet he too—with Saint Paul—was awaiting the eschatological moment when Israel would at last be true to its mission. During the two decades following the war, the Jewish question continued to be raised sporadically in Christian thinking. Then in the middle and late 60's there was a greater resurgence of interest, of which such declarations as those of Vatican II and the Reformed Church of the Netherlands *(Israel: People, Land, and State)* are products. The former stemmed from the desire of Pope John XXIII to introduce a radical transformation in the Christian portrayal of Jews and Judaism. Yet political pressure and conservative reaction corroded the formulations originally proposed. Indeed, in the opinion of many, the entire Vatican II statement on the Jews was nullified by being relegated to a section in a general schema on non-Christian religions. The Dutch declaration, as clearly as any other Christian theological pronouncement, evinces the same ambivalence—Israel elected and Israel rejected—as that found in Journet or Maritain or, on the Protestant side, Karl Barth.

FOR all their ambivalence, however, Journet, Maritain, and Vatican II had opened a Pandora's box. Inevitably, someone could conclude that Christian anti-Judaism and Christian dogma were so interwoven that a change in one would perforce lead to a modification or reformulation of the other. Now a generation of Christian theologians, reacting in its own way to the Holocaust and to its implications for Christianity, has chosen to face these consequences. In three recent volumes, one Catholic and two Protestant thinkers have given us their latest analyses of the problem of the Jewish-Christian relationship.*

Rosemary Radford Ruether's *Faith and Fratricide*, A. Roy Eckardt's *Your People, My People*, and Franklin H. Littell's *The Crucifixion of the Jews* all revolve around common themes and often point to identical or similar solutions. This is not surprising, since the writers know, read, and affect one another (the cynic might wonder whom else they affect). Like Journet and Maritain, all three take the Holocaust as their point of departure. Yet for them the destruction of European Jewry is far more crucial than it was for the two Frenchmen; they consider it a problem as pivotal for Christianity as it is for Judaism. In the view of Franklin Littell, the Holocaust is *the* most important theological event for Christianity of the 20th century, for the Church must now grapple with the dilemma of establishing Christian integrity while coming to terms with the Christian background of Nazi anti-Semitism. No longer are the anti-Semitic pronouncements of Christian tradition to be considered "respectable" merely because they have time and authority behind them; after the Third Reich, they are heresy. There is no choice for the Church but to create "theological space" for Judaism, whose rejection by Christianity has had the most momentous consequences in word and deed.

The three authors do not shrink from a radical response to this radical challenge: Judaism, they hold, has not been superseded. The old Israel has not been replaced by the new. Indeed, to ask the Jew to become a Christian is to imply he is less than he can be. And to say this is to invalidate the soil from which Christianity grew and hence to call *its* legitimacy into question. Thus we are given an appeal for an end to Christian missionizing and proselytizing, and an insistence that Jews be taken at their own self-understanding (Eckardt), that Jews "have a *right* . . . to self-identity and self-definition" (Littell). This in turn requires the formulation of a new covenantal theology or even, with Eckardt, a demand that "all Christian theologizing about the Jewish people be somehow transcended."

With these common principles,

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* *Faith and Fratricide*, by Rosemary Radford Ruether. Seabury, 294 pp., $9.50. *Your People, My People*, by A. Roy Eckardt. Quadrangle, 272 pp., $7.95. *The Crucifixion of the Jews*, by Franklin H. Littell. Harper & Row, 153 pp., $7.95.

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each book has its particular emphases. *Faith and Fratricide* is written by a Catholic, both a serious scholar in patristics and an original theologian. Others—Jews and Christians—have written histories of the anti-Semitic traditions in the gospels and the Fathers, expressed disapproval or confessed complicity, and stopped there. Ruether attempts to find a corrective to the situation through a rethinking of Christianity and an attempt to reconnect it with its Jewish roots. Drawing on an impressive variety of sources, she ably and pointedly illustrates the development of what she calls the "left hand of Christology": an affirmation of Jesus as the Christ which entails, *ipso facto*, the vilification of Judaism. In her words, "the Jews assume the status of a people on probation who fail all the tests and finally are flunked out." The theological displacement of the "old Israel" by the "new Israel" leads to a variety of dichotomies—law-grace, letter-spirit, Jews-Gentiles, Old Testament-New Testament—in which the second term of each pair is spiritualized and the first declared valid only so long as it serves as a substratum for the second.*

Ruether's task is to find a way of affirming her Christian faith while maintaining the integrity of Israel. The question she asks is: "Is it possible to say 'Jesus is Messiah' without, implicitly or explicitly, saying at the same time, 'and the Jews be damned'?" Ruether answers "yes" but her "yes" carries a price tag for traditional Christian belief. For her, to say "Jesus is Messiah" is not to say that the world has been concretely redeemed. Rather, the resurrection experience is to be seen as proleptic—as pointing to future redemption. One may speak, then, of an "unfulfilled messianism" which, as in early Christianity, places renewed emphasis on the *parousia* (second coming). All religions may wait for the moment of redemption together, yet each religion is allowed to follow its own paradigm and not necessarily that of the Easter resurrection.

THE attempt to work out a covenantal theology is absent from *Your People, My People*, although Eckardt has made such an attempt in his earlier work. In fact, the somewhat unsystematic (although quite coherent) sequence of the book ably exemplifies the author's refusal to construct theological systems defining or confining the people Israel in any way. *Your People, My People* is a severe book; few of those who play a role in the contemporary drama of Jewish-Christian relations escape Eckardt's criticisms. He has no truck with Christian "liberals" whose love of "humanity" leads them into a hatred of any form of Jewish particularism, or with those, such as Quakers, whose one-sided view of the Middle East situation stems from an inherited legacy of Christian anti-Semitism. As for conservatives, Eckardt censures the framers of the declaration of the Reformed Church of the Netherlands for failing to admit an ongoing covenant between God and Israel and for insisting that God waits patiently (or impatiently) for Israel to recognize its true calling and become other than what it is. Even the fundamentalists, those very strange bedfellows of the Zionists, come under scrutiny, for Eckardt recognizes that they too will shift allegiances when the Jews fail to convert according to timetable. Nor does he confine his criticism to Christians; Jews too are called to account—the late Abraham Joshua Heschel for daring to suggest that the State of Israel may be a consolation prize for the Holocaust, and the Israeli writer Amos Elon who finds no justification for the state other than that it is a political *fait accompli*.

Yet, perhaps understandably, Eckardt reserves his harshest words not for misguided Jews or Christian anti-Zionists but for Christians who have actually made gestures at lowering the barriers between the two faith-communities but whose gestures have remained only that. He adduces the case of Cardinal Bea, who expended much energy trying to promote a radical new declaration on the Jews from Vatican II. That he failed was surely not his fault, and it is not for this that Eckardt censures him, but rather for his attempt to whitewash the failure in his book, *The Church and the Jewish People*; there Bea justifies the final schema on non-Christian religions and the compromises it underwent with regard to the Jewish issue at the hands of conservative and pro-Arab prelates. Ironically, a Jewish reader might be less critical than Eckardt of Bea's book, and might sympathize with the Cardinal's struggle to demonstrate that the final formulations were not really so far from what was originally intended. Yet Eckardt is not a Jew but a Christian, and family arguments are always more acrimonious. No one, he notes, forced Bea to write this book in the first place; better not to speak at all than to endorse the ancient theology of Jewish election and rejection.

Your People, My People was written on the eve of the Yom Kippur War, and Eckardt thus does not incorporate his reactions to the replay of Christian indifference or hostility to the fate of Israel that showed itself still very much alive at that time. Yet his remarkable reaction to the war—"The Devil and Yom Kippur" (*Midstream*, August-September 1974)—is an outgrowth of many of the themes discussed in this volume. *Your People, My People* is a severe book, but its severity is tempered with humor and faith, Eckardt believing with Kierkegaard and Niebuhr that "humor is second only to faith as a way of living with life's ironies and contingencies."

The Crucifixion of the Jews is in its own way no less harsh than *Your People, My People*. Like Ruether, Littell begins with the New Testament and the Fathers; like Eckardt, he places his main emphasis on modern anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism. In his analysis, Littell points out how the process of abstraction and generalization now characteristic of Western education has prevented Christians from confronting the true charac-

* So insidious is this process that the author herself is not completely liberated from it. The oral Torah is seen by her as "emancipating" Judaism from the priesthood and temple cult. In point of fact, the priest-prophet or priest-sage dichotomy is foreign to rabbinic Judaism, which views the priest and the cult as instruments of love and grace whose loss is to be mourned and not celebrated.

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ter of Christian attitudes toward Judaism. Thus, Christians ignore the Holocaust because they can dismiss it as only one among a number of examples of genocide. In fact, he continues, the Jews themselves are an abstraction for the Christian, who invokes an artificial construct called "Judaism" (compare the Nazi use of *Judentum*) in order to avoid facing the reality of Jewish peoplehood. In this way, the old patristic allegories are revamped in contemporary socio-religious terms.

II

If it is evident that these volumes convey a common message, it is not unreasonable to assume that they will also share a common fate. One can think of three possibilities. They may fall on receptive ears; they may fall on deaf ears; they may fall on hostile ears. It is probably too soon to say whether Eckardt, Littell, and Ruether will raise disciples. Rather, one may wonder whether more harm than good will come from their writings.

Many centuries of Jewish polemic were distilled into Martin Buber's declaration that the Jew feels "the world's lack of redemption . . . against his skin, he tastes it on his tongue, the burden of the unredeemed world lies on him." Is Christianity now, after all this time, to give in? After two thousand years of Christian possession of the "truth," is that truth now to be relativized? After proclaiming its mission to the world, is the Church to admit, in Ruether's words, that "in denying the Israel that makes God live, we have practiced a form of deicide"? Can Christianity, with Eckardt, prefer to "concede that the apostle [Paul] was in error . . . [on the question of the suspension of the election of Israel] rather than to try to make him say the opposite of what he in truth says"? Can it proclaim that "because we took the wonderful goodness of Christianity and changed it into God's misdeed, because we have transubstantiated that faith into a cancer of humanity, we can now only commit ourselves to the demise of whatever remains of Christianity lest worse crimes be done"?

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Are Christians, with Littell, to deem irrelevant the crisis put by Christianity to the Jewish people because "the central issue today is the crisis put to Christianity by a crucified and resurrected Jewry"?

SUCH a radical turnabout in Christian self-understanding hardly seems likely, and it is perhaps for this reason that none of the writers discussed here trusts to the strength of theological systems alone for the success of his or her vision. Instead, all three advocate educational programs which are to alter, experientially, the ways in which Christianity relates to Judaism. Ruether suggests reforms or innovations in seminary curricula which will present Jewish tradition as a counterpoise to the Christian denial of it, which will come to grips with the anti-Jewish element in Christian thought, and which will insist on encounters with "living" Judaism. Littell proposes seminary study in Israel, in order "to dispel the idle vapors of a sentimental 'spirituality,' and renew the consciousness of a providential history involving real persons, concrete events, and specific commitments." On a broader base, he suggests incorporating the observance of certain Jewish holidays into the Christian liturgical calendar. The original rending of Easter from Passover should be sewn up, while practices similar to *Yahrzeit* and Bar Mitzvah would introduce a consciousness of communal continuity and of deliberate personal commitment. Littell feels Christians can come to terms with the Holocaust by observing a day of remembrance in accordance with a liturgy which he publishes as an appendix to his volume.

Clearly, this effort to combat "the failure of Christians to understand the Jewish experience" (the subtitle of Littell's book) and to instill in Christians an awareness of the reality of the Jewish people and the concreteness of the background of their own faith is a departure more radical than any form of "dialogue" set forth thus far in Jewish-Christian relations. It remains to ask: in the face of such pronouncements as those of Eckardt and Littell, how should Jews respond? Certainly, A. J. Heschel's *caveat* on this point is well taken: dialogue is no activity for the uninitiated—one must come to it with rigorous preparation. The era of a volume like *Dialogue*, by J. S. Spong and J. D. Spiro,* is over. For the book's adroit skirting of central issues and the concentration on fallacious similarities between the two faiths (both have festivals at the winter equinox, or Jesus was really a Reform rabbi) hardly stand up to the intense probing one finds in the volumes discussed above. On the other hand, Walter Jacob's *Christianity Through Jewish Eyes*† stresses greater substance (views of Christianity by Jewish thinkers from Mendelssohn to the present) but lacks direction. In itself, it is no example of what it proclaims to illustrate: "the quest for common ground."

THE content of interfaith dialogue—a better word might be communication—is becoming far too important to be left to the professional "dialoguers" and local clergy. As far as Jews are concerned, it is perhaps time for those segments of Jewry best qualified to discuss these matters—on the one hand, spokesmen for the traditional Jewish community, on the other hand, scholars and historians—to cease abdicating their responsibility to those least qualified. A. Roy Eckardt asks: "Who in fact builds for the future? He who desires to bury the past, refusing to allow any real link between his present behavior and that past? Or the human being who dedicates himself to redeeming the present consequences of the past?" The redemption Eckardt speaks of is a universal task.

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* *Dialogue: In Search of Jewish/Christian Understanding*, by John Shelby Spong and Jack Daniel Spiro. Seabury, 109 pp., $3.50.

† *Christianity Through Jewish Eyes*, by Walter Jacob. HUC-Ktav, 284 pp., $12.50.

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Political Romance

RAGTIME. By E. L. DOCTOROW. *Random House. 270 pp. $8.95.*

Reviewed by HILTON KRAMER

THE HOSANNAS that have greeted E. L. Doctorow's *Ragtime,* elevating the book to instant commercial success and its author to literary stardom, have already prompted one early celebrant—Raymond Sokolov, writing in the Washington *Post*—to caution readers against the extravagant claims (his own included) being made on its behalf.* This excellent advice is unlikely to be heeded, however. Mr. Doctorow is in possession of a genuine literary gift, and readers who have despaired of ever being able to finish some of the more highly touted of recent "serious" novels have every reason to be grateful to a writer who does not spurn the traditional obligation to provide a clear and vivid narrative furnished with colorful characters and a significant theme. *Ragtime,* moreover, has the additional virtue—for there is no question that its audience regards this as a virtue—of endowing some of our more fashionable social pieties with a resonance that is positively mythic. Although the book's complex web of action is wholly confined to the placid atmosphere of turn-of-the-century America—another large element of its appeal, of course—and its story closes on the eve of America's entry into the First World War, heroic roles are exclusively reserved for women, blacks, and partisans of the Left. The villains in *Ragtime,* drawn with all the subtlety of a William Gropper cartoon, are all representatives of money, the middle class, and white ethnic prejudice. Does this make it sound a little more like 1968 than 1908? That, alas, is very much the point. It is no exaggeration, therefore, to say that the myth of the "bad" America that emerged with such virulent force in the 1960's has found its true laureate in the author of this stylish historical romance.

Is it splitting critical hairs to describe *Ragtime* as a romance rather than as a novel? Consider the tale it tells, and the language employed in the telling. Father, whose ample income derives "from the manufacture of flags and buntings and other accoutrements of patriotism, including fireworks," installs his family—wife, son, bachelor brother-in-law, and aging father-in-law—in the "stout manse" he has built in New Rochelle, in 1902, only a few days before joining Peary's third expedition to the Arctic. There, though he proves "not the sturdiest member of the expedition" because of "the tendency of his extremities to freeze easily," Father—never given any other name in the narrative—has the good fortune to discover Esquimo sex ("They cohabited without even undressing, through vents in their furs, and they went at it with grunts and shouts of fierce joy"), and even manages to sample a bit. Mother, a tower of strength and character beneath her period mask of demure and accommodating femininity, likewise discovers an alien race in the form of a "bloody . . . unwashed newborn baby," miraculously still alive, freshly buried among the flowerbeds of her New Rochelle garden. Both the infant and his instantly located mother ("She had a child's face, a guileless brown beautiful face . . . the color of dark chocolate") are immediately welcomed into the family manse, there to be loved and cared for until the fateful day when the black father, a splendid figure of a man who drives a splendidly appointed new automobile, wins the black girl's hand in marriage. Before these happy nuptials can be completed, however, our black hero—a ragtime musician of rising reputation—is cruelly harassed by a group of Irish immigrant firemen, who viciously vandalize the splendid new Model-T Ford. Seeking legal redress and failing to receive it from his white adversaries, this musician-hero goes underground, organizes a cadre of exemplary black guerrillas, turns terrorist, and, aided by the white bachelor brother-in-law, who in the course of serving Father's fireworks business has become an expert on explosives, occupies the Morgan Library in Manhattan with the threat of blowing up its priceless treasures if his demands—full restoration of his Model-T to its original condition—are not fully met. The white world quickly capitulates. The automobile, functioning here as a kind of *machina ex deo,* is restored to triumphant splendor (at J. P. Morgan's expense).

This is very far from being the whole story, however. There is the parallel tale of Tateh and his daughter ("The Little Girl in the pinafore"). Tateh is a young immigrant Jewish peddler, a socialist of course ("He looked at the palaces [along Fifth and Madison Avenues] and his heart was outraged. . . . On these wide empty sidewalks in this part of the city the police did not like to see immigrants"), who, without ceasing to be a loyal socialist, rises from the poverty of the Lower East Side to fame and wealth in the movie business, and thus proves worthy of winning Mother's large heart after Father's convenient demise. And into this elaborate scheme of converging destinies are introduced several famous historical

HILTON KRAMER *is art critic of the New York* Times *and the author of* The Age of the Avant-Garde.

* "Some novels," Mr. Sokolov wrote, "are almost thrust upon us, declared instant masterpieces from all sides and then slip from view. Remember William Styron's *The Confessions of Nat Turner*? As someone who helped mount that six-day wonder's success, I am now unable to reread Styron's softheaded book without embarrassment, and so I am feeling leery about praising *Ragtime* to the rooftops along with the general chorus of reviewers" (*Book World,* July 13, 1975). Mr. Sokolov promptly recovered, however, and rejoined the chorus.

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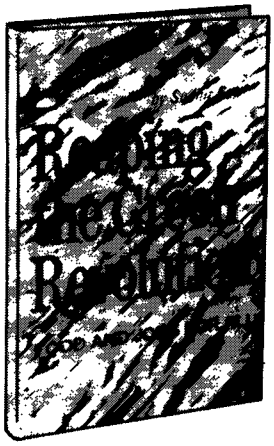

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personages: Evelyn Nesbit, fresh from the ordeal of Harry Thaw's shooting of Stanford White, takes a philanthropic fancy to Tateh's Little Girl and suffers the attentions of Mother's volatile brother—not to mention those of Emma Goldman—before sinking into oblivion; Harry Houdini, interrupting "Mother and Father's coitus" on a Sunday afternoon, seeks aid for his chauffeur-driven Pope-Toledo Runabout ("It had brass headlamps in front of the radiator and brass sidelamps over the fenders . . . The driver was in livery") at the New Rochelle manse; and so on, in ever widening arcs of fabulous improbability, and all recounted in a style of fastidious storybook simplicity.

"Doubtless the main difference between the novel and the romance," wrote the late Richard Chase in *The American Novel and Its Tradition*, "is the way in which they view reality." Chase then went on to make certain distinctions that tell us a good deal, I think, about what sort of book *Ragtime* really is. "The novel," he observed, "renders reality closely and in comprehensive detail. It takes a group of people and sets them going about the business of life. We come to see these people in their real complexity of temperament and motive. They are in explicable relation to nature, to each other, to their social class, to their own past. Character is more important than action and plot, and probably the tragic or comic actions of the narrative will have the primary purpose of enhancing our knowledge of and feeling for an important character, a group of characters, or a way of life." By such criteria, certainly, *Ragtime* can scarcely be said to be a novel at all.

"By contrast," Chase wrote, "the romance . . . feels free to render reality in less volume and detail. It tends to prefer action to character, and action will be freer in a romance than in a novel, encountering, as it were, less resistance from reality." In *Ragtime*, as everyone knows, Mr. Doctorow plays so fast and loose with historical personalities that what Chase called "resistance from reality" is virtually nil. Emma Goldman massages the breasts of Evelyn Nesbit, Houdini has a brief audience with the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, Henry Ford sits down to lunch with J. P. Morgan, and Freud flees America because of a paucity of public toilets. "The romance can flourish without providing much intricacy of relation," Chase wrote, and the relations that obtain among *Ragtime's* many characters—whether "real" or invented—prove to be simple indeed and purely emblematic. "The characters, probably rather two-dimensional types," Chase wrote in a passage that exactly anticipates the quality of Mr. Doctorow's narrative, "will not be complexly related to each other or to society or to the past. Human beings will on the whole be shown in ideal relation—that is, they will share emotions only after these have become abstract or symbolic. . . . Character itself becomes, then, somewhat abstract and ideal, so much so in some romances that it seems to be merely a function of plot. The plot we may expect to be highly colored. Astonishing events may occur, and these are likely to have a symbolic or ideological, rather than a realistic, plausibility."

I have quoted from Chase's observations at this length because I think they go to the heart of Mr. Doctorow's book and tell us, too, something important about its reception. For what Mr. Doctorow has written in *Ragtime* is a political romance—it even has a happy ending of sorts: the underdogs triumph—and its plausibility is nothing if not ideological. The major fictional characters—Father, Mother, Mother's Younger Brother, etc.—are all ideological inventions, designed to serve the purposes of a political fable. To be born into the middle class is, in *Ragtime*, to be nameless and faceless, a cardboard pawn identifiable exclusively in terms of stunted emotions and wasteful consumption. Only the black hero—Coalhouse Walker, Jr.—is accorded the dignity of a full name, or indeed, dignity of any sort. Members of the middle class, miserable wretches that they are, may, of course, be reborn. Younger Brother achieves this rebirth by allying himself with the blacks and eventually dying as one

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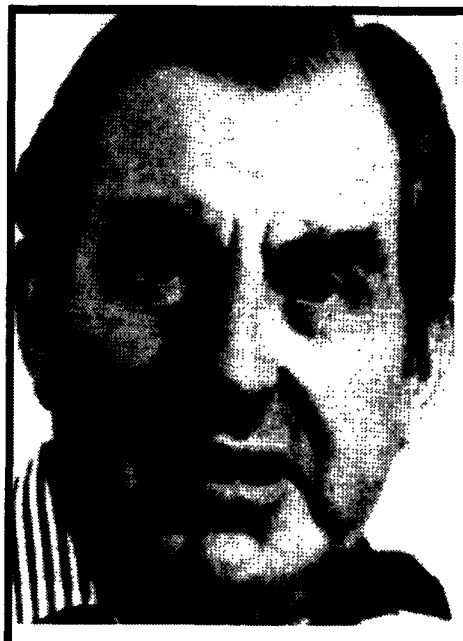
of Zapata's revolutionaries in Mexico, and even Mother is allowed to escape her dismal bourgeois fate by marrying the newly rich Jewish-socialist movie mogul. Otherwise, to remain middle class is to remain soulless. It is also to remain sexually underprivileged. In the world of *Ragtime,* only the exploited, the abused, and the reborn enjoy good sex.

The historical personages who occupy so large a place in *Ragtime* are similarly disposed of. The great Houdini, lacking political consciousness, is revealed to be in a permanent state of Oedipal arrest. Morgan is portrayed as little more than an avaricious crackpot, Freud an anti-American snob, Ford a clever but malevolent yokel, and Booker T. Washington an ineffectual knave. Emma Goldman, on the other hand, reigns in this fable as a woman for all seasons, a pillar of libertarian virtue, and a model, naturally, of sexual fulfillment. One notes with a certain curiosity that, except for Houdini, Emma Goldman played a vastly smaller role in shaping the actual course of American life in the 20th century than any of the other historical figures I have named here. Is it any wonder, then, that she is accorded the lion's share of virtue in this tale of national malfeasance? To have had a hand in shaping American life in the 20th century to any appreciable degree is, in *Ragtime,* a crime not easily forgiven. Penance is called for, and punishment meted out—Mr. Doctorow is, in his way, a harsh moralist. Bourgeois America is consigned to eternal damnation in this book, and its antagonists elevated to political sainthood.

STILL, the great appeal of *Ragtime,* though owing much to the way its author has turned the political debacle of the 60's into a mythical retroactive triumph, does not lie primarily in its rehearsal of radical pieties. These, after all, are now the common property of hordes of writers—in the movies and the theater and television, and in our major newspapers and magazines, no less than in the novel—for whom the myth of the "bad" America is an unquestioned article of faith. What distinguishes Mr. Doctorow's use of this myth is something else—his gift for combining it with the picturesque. *Ragtime* is, in effect, a kind of story-teller's flea-market. It abounds in vivid description of all those turn-of-the-century objects and styles, from the bathing costumes worn by Mother and Father on the beach at Atlantic City to the furnishings of their home in New Rochelle to the precise accessories adorning the automobile driven by Coalhouse Walker, Jr., that triggers the book's climactic scene of confrontation, which now command such high prices in the antiques business and inspire such widespread longing, imitation, and parody in the chic world of bourgeois consumption. The stern realities of Mr. Doctorow's political romance—its sweeping indictment of American life, and its celebration of a radical alternative—are all refracted, as it were, in the quaint, chromatic glow of a Tiffany lamp, and are thus softened and made more decorative in the process. Everything in *Ragtime,* even its politics, is expertly wrapped in the scenery of nostalgia, a strategy that has the effect of rendering its essentially adversary spirit almost sweet to the taste. The irony of this picturesque method—or is it only dishonesty?—is to be found in the way Mr. Doctorow flatters and exploits the sensibility of the very class he seeks to subvert. We are given every opportunity to savor the delectable aesthetic surface of the *Ragtime* era, and every encouragement to detest the class responsible for its existence. In the end, I suppose, Mr. Doctorow is secure in the knowledge that he can have it both ways, for there is nothing his middle-class readers so much relish nowadays as an assault on their integrity suitably embellished with signs of their superior taste.

Perhaps it is this skillful exploitation of the picturesque, which ministers to a fondness for the beauties of a lost world even while instructing us on its moral depravity, that accounts for the most astonishing aspect of the book's reception: the almost complete unanimity with which its earliest re-



MAJOR-GENERAL CHAIM HERZOG

Israel's new Ambassador to the United Nations has written the "compelling story"[1] of the Yom Kippur War, the near-disaster which became "an astounding Israeli victory." "A brilliant analysis,"[2] "vivid and controversial,"[3] his "lucid and authoritative study can almost be regarded as an unofficial history of the conflict,"[4] and "one of the strongest statements on the Mid-east by a topmost official."[5]

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viewers agreed to ignore its patently political purpose. (An important exception is Greil Marcus's brilliant analysis, "'Ragtime' and 'Nashville': Failure-of-America Fad," in the *Village Voice*, August 4, 1975.) I do not believe, however, that this remarkable feat of misperception can be ascribed to the crude exercise of simple stupidity—though on the subject of the abysmal standards that currently characterize the book-reviewing profession, I would be among the last to suggest that stupidity can be wholly discounted as a consideration. No, I think we have to look for the source of this misperception in some larger fact of our culture—in the fact, that is, that our culture is now so completely permeated with the myth of American malevolence that an ambitious political romance like *Ragtime*, which distorts the actual materials of history with a fierce ideological arrogance, is no longer in any danger of being recognized as having a blunt political point. The reviewers who are responsible for making this book a phenomenal success are, in this sense, at one with the audience to which it is addressed: an educated class that has grown morally obtuse about the world in which it lives and prospers. What Richard Chase said of the romance as a literary genre—"likely to have a symbolic or ideological, rather than a realistic, plausibility"—also describes, in the case of *Ragtime*, the cherished illusions of its readers.

Statesman's Career

THE LETTERS AND PAPERS OF CHAIM WEIZMANN. VOLS. III-VII. General Editor, MEYER W. WEISGAL. *Vol. III, Oxford-Keter, Inc. 414 pp. $12.50. Vols. IV-VII, Keter, Inc. Vol. IV: 358 pp. Vol. V: 431 pp. Vol. VI: 454 pp. Vol. VII: 569 pp. $17.50 each volume.*

Reviewed by CHAIM RAPHAEL

THE letters and papers of Chaim Weizmann began to be collected for publication, under the guidance of his devoted disciple Meyer Weisgal, in 1949. With the major collecting and research work well under way, the first volume (going up to 1902) appeared in 1968.* Since then the pace has accelerated, and seven volumes are now available, carrying the story halfway, but with a distinct sense of flourish, to November 1917. The flourish can be saluted since the seventh volume coincides in publication with the 100th anniversary year of Weizmann's birth and at the same time deals with the background to his first great triumph—the Balfour Declaration.

If for a second one could freeze history at that point, what a romantic story it would be, documented perfectly in these seven volumes. For decades the fight has been vague—unreal—and suddenly victory is within reach. After nearly 2,000 years of exile, the Jews are promised a National Home in the land they have dreamed of and prayed for. Looking back now, one sees it as a moment of total innocence. Ahead were tragedies and achievements beyond anyone's conception. Yet if the precise course and scale of events were unpredictable, every element of them is tangible in these letters, governed as they are by an overpowering faith: a people crippled by suffering will transform itself in liberty. This is the thesis: and despite everything it has been fulfilled.

What is tangible too—but more baleful in its meaning—is the inwardness of this vision. The transformation called for is so momentous that it must absorb Jews totally. Success is the only way to win understanding. They will hurt no one, displace no one, but merely build where nothing existed, "making the desert bloom," "bridging East and West," totally sincere in every cliché that finds expression. With mounting amazement they were to learn that their inward conviction was not going to dispel enmity: yet it was a posture that the builders of Zion could never give up, even in the face of massacre and war. "One day the Arabs will understand. . . ." The tragedy was in fact immutable in the terms of the game. Without total self-absorption, nothing comparable could have been achieved. With it, they could never relax toward "accommodation" in any terms that would satisfy the Arabs.

BUT if this impasse was built into the story from the beginning, the Balfour Declaration still has a messianic ring about it, for something quite extraordinary happened to the Jewish people at that moment. In the aftermath of later reversals and betrayals, Britain's motivations in issuing the Declaration, and Weizmann's decisive contribution to it, have occasionally been sprinkled with a kind of stale sawdust. Yet if one has a shred of historical imagination, one can see that it was revolutionary to Jewish consciousness. Isaiah Friedman, author of a new study of this period, says, quite simply: "After November 1917, Jewry was never the same again." In terms of the Mandate that was to follow, "the Jewish people" had become "an entity recognized by international law." What had happened for all time was "the recognition of the collective Jewish right to Palestine."

Weizmann was not the only begetter of the Declaration, but his role was crucial. Walter Laqueur, the latest and perhaps the coolest commentator on these events, says in *A History of Zionism*:

> The Balfour Declaration was essentially the work of one man—Chaim Weizmann. Without his leadership and persistent lobbying, the Zionist movement would not have received the charter on which its subsequent activities were based.

The late Richard Crossman, with characteristic élan, had said a few years earlier in *A Nation Reborn* that the Balfour Declaration was "one of the very rare cases where one can assert with confidence that one man's personality changed the course of history." And now we can follow the story of how this happened firsthand, in Weizmann's own letters. The experience is like reading a great novel.

The analogy of a novel is appo-

CHAIM RAPHAEL *is the author of, among other works,* A Feast of History, Memoirs of a Special Case, *and* The Walls of Jerusalem.

* See my "The Young Weizmann," COMMENTARY, June 1971, discussing Vols. I and II.

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site for two reasons. First, there is the exciting quality of suspense that pervades material composed day-by-day without hindsight. One knows how it is going to end, but one is caught up in each thread of the story, wondering where it will lead, where it will fit in. The other quality is even more novelistic. The letters pour out to a vast variety of people whose characters gradually emerge, always through Weizmann's eyes, and yet with our own feelings aroused too, so that we are never content to accept them as ciphers with readymade parts. The letters are not dialogue —we are given only Weizmann's end of the exchange in detail—yet they suggest character the way a very spare dialogue often does in a novel. And it is a great cast of characters, starting off with Jews who were at home equally with Sholem Aleichem and Dostoevsky, and then adding in strong elements of *The Forsyte Saga* as Weizmann's society connections begin to expand after 1914.

But above all, of course, it is Weizmann's own character that we are concerned with. Until 1918 Weizmann had no executive status in the Zionist movement but operated almost from the sidelines. We find his authority growing from 1915 on, when he is working in London for the government as a high-level scientific adviser and administrator, at ease in the British corridors of power, and trusted as the channel of communication to important Jewish leaders the world over. But the sense of his own personal power has been there from the beginning. Turning back from Vol. VII to the earlier days when he is fighting desperately for his voice to be heard —pleading with friends, urging them on, inspiring, denouncing, working all through the night often in remote places, without power and without funds—one finds in his letters the same conviction, the same utter self-confidence. What might have been taken in the early letters for bossiness, or youthful hot temper—Weizmann had plenty of that—is seen, as he moved on, to emerge from some unshakable quality at his core. It is not easy to analyze the look of distinction that seemed to flow from his physical presence, but in the spontaneity of the letters one at least gets a whiff of the mysterious power that so many have spoken and written of.

THE Editorial Board of this project decided, from the beginning, to print *all* the letters, in order to present a view of Weizmann, as Meyer Weisgal says in the Foreword to Vol. II, "through the prism of his own personality," with no suspicion of "myth-making" that selections would have encouraged. This was a wise decision, for through the uninhibited profusion of the letters, covering so many issues and events that stirred him, we are brought vividly in touch not merely with the issues themselves—many of them still potent in Jewish life—but with a set of principles and values that were instinctive to Weizmann and far outlive the immediate circumstances in which they were expressed.

One such issue was Weizmann's instinctive hatred of all forms of Marxist ideology among Jews. The fact that the ideologues in question were anti-Zionist was not the main point; rather, they were morally contemptible in Weizmann's view for running away from their Jewish identity, and intellectually stupid for believing that Marxism really meant a brotherhood of man that would incidentally solve all Jewish problems. In the early volumes we read of all-night debates with other students in Geneva, reported in letters to his Zionist comrades, in which his contempt for the "socialists" expresses itself somewhat nastily and yet with a compelling kind of insight. Writing to Leo Motzkin in June 1900, he says:

> I have seen socialists here unable to utter two words without swearing, spitting, or slandering someone three times, and I confess, dear friend, that I am not filled with respect for these representatives of the social conscience and social justice. The socialism of most of the local people . . . is merely an *Ausfluss* of their own insignificance and individual weakness. . . . They flock to the crowd because they are frightened of themselves. Only bitterness and similar negative motives drive our semi-Jewish youth here into the socialist camp. . . . They bring to socialism the elements of corruption and ferment. That is why they cannot be Zionists. They are lackeys, and lackeys in socialism cannot understand the boldness and the great cultural and ethical significance of the idea of the liberation of Jewry.

In his famous long letter to Herzl in May 1903, he is, in a way, more sympathetic. He has seen the way the Jewish youth in Russia suffer martyrdom in their thousands for the socialist cause, and longs to attach their enthusiasm to Zionism. The testing moment of this hope is reflected in Vol. VII, with the Russian upheavals of 1917. After the March revolution, followed by the provisional government, Weizmann shared with all Russian Jewry the sense of release from the horrors of Czardom, and (as his letters show) saw a chance to rouse enthusiasm among Russian Jews and the government itself for a British-sponsored homeland in Palestine. But with the Bolshevik takeover—virtually on the day of the Balfour Declaration —he recognized instantly (unlike some who still had hopes) that all the evils in Marxism that he had foreseen—corruption, confusion, terror—would rise to the surface. The future of Russian Jewry, briefly hopeful, would sink into the abyss.

ANOTHER issue which seemed, at the time, more of a side issue, but which has persisted in various forms through the years and is still, in a sense, a fulcrum for Israel's future, is the role of "culture" in Zionist work. Zionism in Weizmann's view could never be simply a matter of the rescue of the persecuted, or even the creation of a state. It had to be "a life-giving force" which made Jews into better human beings, turning everything negative, stale, or corrupt into a positive reassertion of decency and dignity. In his early arguments he never put it quite so crudely, but merely talked endlessly of the need for "cultural programs" to insert "Jewish content" into the movement. He could be sardonic about what he was trying

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to do: "the wretched cultural issue," he says in a letter, "is prowling unsolved like a ghost from one Congress to the next." Yet it was central to his critique of Herzl, and could lead him to say in a speech, at the height of Herzl's power:

> To tell the truth, Herzl is not a nationalist but a project conceiver. . . . He considers external conditions only, instead of the force on which we rely—the psychology of the people and the aspirations which animate it.

The set of values which Weizmann drew on was taken by him to flow directly from the Bible, which he quotes constantly in the letters, though mostly as a kind of familiar shorthand, as everyone today quotes Shakespeare. Yet unlike another Bible-quoter, David Ben-Gurion, Weizmann did not agree that everything in Jewish history between the close of the biblical period and the reestablishment of the Jewish state in modern times was peripheral and negative. For Ben-Gurion, the Diaspora of 2,000 years—and the Diaspora today—had to be consciously rooted out. "We must not be proud of it," he wrote. "On the contrary, we must reject it utterly and completely." Weizmann's concept was totally different. For him, Jewish history was not put into limbo when the Diaspora began: Jews of the remote past and the 20th century were part of an unbroken, unfolding story. The Bible was not a documentation of glory now being resurrected: it was an ancient literature, full of mysterious power, which had fed Jewish observance and aspiration continuously.

For Ben-Gurion, there were only "four major occurrences in Jewish history" (as he put it)—the Exodus, the giving of the Torah, the conquest of the land by Joshua, and the creation of the State of Israel in 1948. For Weizmann, the meaning of being a Jew would never express itself in acts of power. The return to the land of Israel meant political independence, but always he saw it in terms of interior regeneration. What kind of people *morally* would the people of Israel become? To put it more simply: what kind of Jews would they be? This was a question that lingered forever in his mind.

HERE, ultimately, is the paradox of the man revealed in these seven volumes of letters. From youth, he is totally at home in political strategy: from 1917 onward he will become a figure of political magic, at ease with the mighty of the world, powerful, sophisticated. Yet at heart he is a simple moralist. To be a Jew in *his* sense—to be a "good" Jew—was a question of behavior: one had to act in a way consonant with the spirit and faith that had carried Jews through their long Diaspora. To break this pattern of behavior—as in taking to arms—might be logically necessary, but it was not a task he could have embraced with the boldness and brashness of a Ben-Gurion. By the same token, the State of Israel, once secured, would have had a different ethos had he been young enough or strong enough to implant in it the trusting warmth of his own character.

Could he have found an accommodation with the Arabs? Certainly he was a man of compromise: but by now the situation had moved beyond the scope of sweet reason. In his last great speeches—to the Anglo-American Committee of 1946 and the Zionist Congress in that year—the power he projects is spiritual. He is like Moses on Mt. Pisgah—proud but baffled. All he asks for the Jews is a tiny piece of land where they can be themselves, neither dominating nor dominated. To be themselves was not to be turned into a new Israeli race, but to express, ineffably, the spirit of the centuries.

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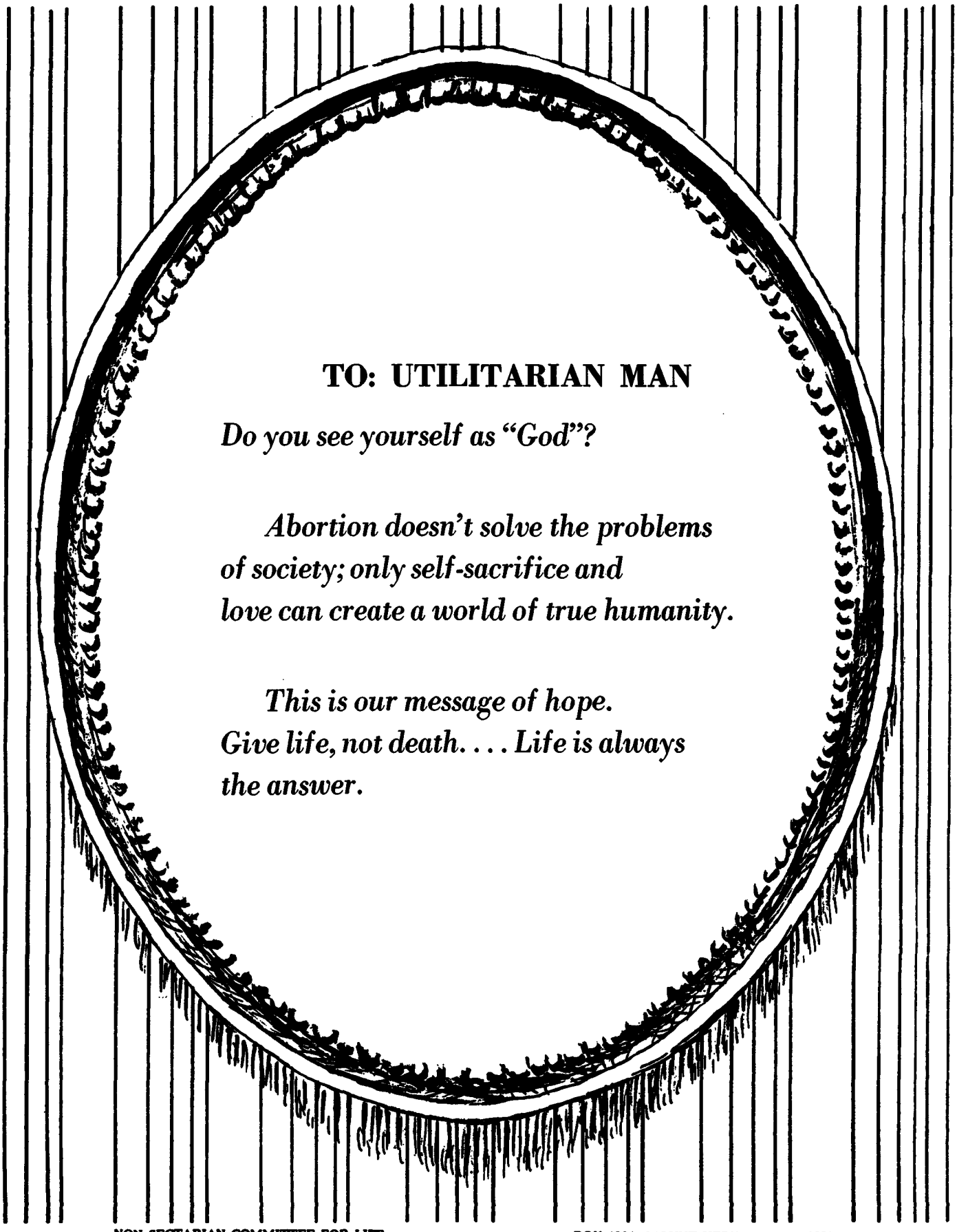

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The Campus & the Nation

THE DIVIDED ACADEMY: PROFESSORS AND POLITICS. By EVERETT CARLL LADD, JR., and SEYMOUR MARTIN LIPSET. *McGraw-Hill. 407 pp. $17.50.*

EDUCATION AND POLITICS AT HARVARD. By SEYMOUR MARTIN LIPSET and DAVID RIESMAN. *McGraw-Hill. 440 pp. $15.95.*

Reviewed by CHESTER E. FINN, JR.

IN THE spring of 1969, after the most violent campus disruption of Harvard's recent history, the Faculty of Arts and Sciences refused the student strikers' demand that it grant amnesty to those who had occupied University Hall, and chose instead to reprimand or expel 138 of the participants. A year later, after the Cambodian incursion and the shootings at Kent and Jackson State gave rise to emotional but far less tumultuous conditions in the Yard, the faculty voted "academic amnesty" for the semester to all students disinclined to take their examinations.

If the actions of the central faculty of the nation's premier institution of higher education appear less than wholly consistent, one wants a more satisfying explanation than professorial whimsy, for these were troubled times and both decisions were taken after prolonged debate and with the utmost gravity. The two sequences have a biblical quality—violence begetting retribution, and anguish, forgiveness—but each was also a specific political event, the first arising primarily from strains within the university and the second from tensions in the nation.

The political attitudes of American professors that Ladd and Lipset depict in generous detail and with much insight yield one ready explanation for the behavior of the Harvard faculty: whatever their politics, most academics deplore campus violence and favor the expulsion of disruptive students. The events in Cambridge in 1969—the same year, it happens, as the principal survey on which *The Divided Academy* is based—were unquestionably more physical than those of 1970, hence more likely to elicit a tough reaction.

But if the substantive issues of the day, ROTC and black studies in the earlier year, the Vietnam war in the later, had alone been the subject of faculty debate, unsullied by problems of university housekeeping, the vote might well have been the same in both semesters. For American professors are not just opinionated individuals who tailor their political attitudes to the topics at hand and whose views are transformed at the college gate: their thinking has an ideological character which shapes and orders their responses to a broad range of national and campus concerns in strikingly consistent ways and, for all their rich variety, they are extraordinarily predictable in their stance on contentious issues. Ladd and Lipset found such a high degree of intercorrelation between faculty attitudes on university and national affairs that a single scale of liberalism and conservatism could embrace both.

The academy divides between Left and Right, to be sure, and compared to the larger society its median is well to portside, but on the whole those professors who favor the easing of admissions standards in order to enroll more minority students would also legalize marijuana; those who would hang tough in the Mekong Delta had scant sympathy for student participation in university governance.

The traits associated with consistent faculty Left-liberalism are characteristic of campuses such as Harvard: the university is strong in the social sciences, puts more weight on research than teaching, has a large percentage of Jewish professors, prizes faculty governance, enjoys high institutional prestige, boasts many government consultants and grant-recipients, and has a tradition of independence and academic freedom. Though few scholars would welcome the proposition that such institutional factors may predict their private political attitudes, for the academy in its entirety they seem to do so. Conservatism inheres in the agriculture school, the low-status college, the

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non-publishing teacher, and the unionized engineering department.

EVEN in its more punitive mood, the Harvard faculty showed signs of acting like a representative sample of the nation's liberal professors: Lipset's historical account in *Education and Politics at Harvard* traces the deliberations that led to the dropping of criminal charges against the student storm troopers, the repudiation of administrators who called in the police, the lifting of academic credit for ROTC, and the approval of an Afro-American studies program entailing student participation in course design and faculty hiring.

Yet a measure of ambivalence remained. In addition to disciplining the student ringleaders, the faculty reined in a free-wheeling radical social-relations course that had become a virtual SDS preserve led by an instructor who was among those arrested in University Hall. A few years later, after some distinguished black scholars at Harvard accused the Afro-American Studies Department of low standards, the faculty struck the provisions for student participation in faculty selection.

Slender reeds, perhaps, on which to hang a hypothesis, and yet enough to suggest the possibility that when academic standards are at stake another kind of ideology may come into play, particularly in universities whose stock in trade is high-quality scholarship.

Ladd and Lipset found, lurking in the interstices of their enormous sample, a cadre of professors with characteristics that hint at more than a statistical artifact. A few thousand members, 4 to 8 per cent of the total, do not fit easily into a consolidated scale of political attitudes, for they are liberal on national issues and conservative on campus matters. Somewhat more than consistent liberals, and far more than either the steadfast conservatives or the other odd fraction of "national conservatives, campus liberals," these professors are distinguished by an extraordinarily high level of scholarship, dedication to research, frequent publishing, and a tendency to congregate at high-status universities. They wield influence in the academy out of proportion to their numbers. In short, they resemble many senior faculty members at places like Harvard.

Thoroughgoing liberals when national policies and world affairs are at issue, they resist campus changes that threaten the stern meritocratic norms by which they achieved their present eminence or that would alter the ways of the elite universities which shelter them and their standards of excellence. Not for them such innovations as student participation, flexible admissions criteria, hiring keyed to race or sex, collective bargaining, undue "relevance" in the curriculum, and academic credit for feeling or doing. For all its seeming timelessness, the order they defend is a development of the 20th century in the United States, and cherished by its supporters in part

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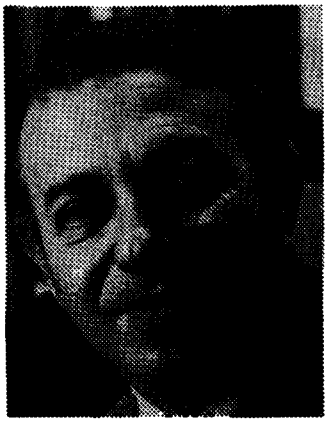

JOURNEY TO THE TRENCHES
The Life of Isaac Rosenberg 1890-1918
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because its roots are still so shallow.

DAVID RIESMAN subtitles his thoughtful and personalized account of educational reform at Harvard, "Meritocracy and Its Adversaries." When he entered the college in the late 20's, President Lowell "had been battling the young barons of ascription with only modest success." With few surplus applicants, most any student from a good school and with decent College Board scores had hope of getting in. Young men from Boston's better families lived and dined together in clubs and Gold Coast residences just outside the Yard. Jewish students were present, but in carefully limited numbers, and the barriers to blacks and Irish, while less formal, were as real. Once admitted, a boy had no need to tax his intellect to remain, though then as later it was not easy to excel. The faculty contained a number of illustrious scholars, but also a complement of "frustrated pedants" and "gentlemanly amateurs." Radicals there were, but for all the *angst* over Sacco and Vanzetti—and Lowell's role in their fate—student straw voters favored Hoover in 1928 and stood by the Republicans instead of alumnus Roosevelt in 1932 and 1936.

A quarter-century later, the "aristocratic meritocracy" of Lowell's day had given way to the democratic version of James B. Conant and Nathan Pusey. Vigorous recruitment and ample scholarships drew in talented students of every class and creed from all parts of the country, though applications exceeded admissions many times over. Conant's system of ad-hoc committees meant that any permanent faculty appointment had to pass muster before a tribunal of scholars charged, at least in theory, with determining whether the candidate was the ablest man in his field available anywhere in the world.

Professors who passed through this fine mesh by and large subscribed to the principles of which it was woven, and so, for a time, did most students. But by the mid-60's the backlash had begun, uniting those who wanted the university to respond more sympathetically to the egalitarian dynamics of the time and those whose own Harvard experiences left a residue of guilt, envy, or bitterness toward its norms and practices.

The crescendo came in 1969, when the Great Bust shocked many who had trusted that Harvard's enduring habits of individualism and flexibility would spare it the kind of polarized confrontation that had rocked Berkeley and Columbia. Forgotten were three centuries of precedent: the day in 1674 when the entire student body left the college to protest corporal punishment, the butter riot of 1766, the "Gunpowder Plot" of 1842, the blowing-up of a university building by students in 1870, campus melees between pro-Germans and anti-Nazis in the 30's, and scores of other events of varying intensity.

The seizure of University Hall, then, was neither the first violent protest by Harvard students nor the first inspired by a convergence of campus and national concerns, but no recent contretemps had posed such a vivid contrast between the meritocracy of the university and the increasingly Left-liberal politics of the faculty and students whose presence attested to the primacy of those norms. The assault on university elitism was led by students enrolled in the college's most competitive and exclusive fields of concentration, the attack on privilege was spearheaded by high-aptitude scions of upper-class families, and the world-renowned faculty obliged to judge these events was overwhelmingly committed to civil rights, opposed to the manifestations of militarism, and contained more than a few eminent professors who had found Cambridge a safe harbor from the storms of fascism and Stalinism in other lands and other campuses.

A measure of tranquility returned to the nation's colleges, Harvard among them, in the 70's, as the Vietnam war ebbed and the rivalry for admission to medical and law schools brought a somewhat tarnished form of competitive striving back to the examination hall. At the same time, students won places on university committees, administrators seemed to be chosen for their skills as conciliators, and the curriculum was unchained to permit all manner of esoteric educational programs.

But as campus issues began to get resolved without violence, and as national issues seemed to retreat to the banks of the Potomac, some of the ambivalence the Harvard faculty displayed in 1969 and 1970 endured in the colleges, and forged odd links between the affairs of state and the concerns of the academy.

The 1972 election posed a disagreeable dilemma for professors who did not much like either candidate and reluctantly opted for the one they found less objectionable. The endemic liberalism of most scholars assured more Democratic than Republican votes, and although Nixon fared slightly better on campus than he had in 1968 the gains did not begin to match his national landslide. The GOP might have drawn more faculty support, Ladd and Lipset speculate, if it had not insisted on treating the professoriate as a unified and hopelessly hostile bloc, for the party of George McGovern had characteristics that if skillfully exploited might have cut across the dominant faculty ideologies. Not only were the Democrats openly receptive to activist students and seemingly tolerant of those who lately had tended toward disruption but the party was also embracing quotas in the conduct of its own affairs and, despite the candidate's ritual disclaimer, appeared to flirt with ascription as a desirable alternative to meritocracy in the management of the nation's universities.

Professors over fifty, traditionally more conservative than their younger colleagues, gave a clear majority to Nixon (compared to 53 per cent for Humphrey in 1968 and 76 per cent for Johnson in 1964). A modest yet provocative defection from the Democrats also occurred in the ranks of the nation's most prolific scholars. Among those who had published at least five times in the months previous, 44 per cent voted for Nixon in 1972; not a majority, to be sure, but almost half again as many as had favored the same candidate four years earlier and thrice the percentage for Goldwater in 1964. More than one hundred luminaries of the academy,

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most of them drawn from the normally Left-liberal legions of social scientists, affixed their signatures to an advertisement in the New York *Times* paid for by the Committee to Reelect the President. Subsequent events would grieve and embarrass many of these distinguished scholars, but in the context of 1972 the thought must at least be entertained that some of those who had most successfully climbed the greasy pole of academe, like their brethren at Harvard a few years earlier, were torn by the difficulty of reconciling their national liberalism with actions and positions that seemed to erode the hard-won principles which, in their eyes, safeguarded liberalism on the campus itself.

Equality

THE INTELLIGENT RADICAL'S GUIDE TO ECONOMIC POLICY: THE MIXED ECONOMY. By JAMES E. MEADE. *Allen & Unwin (London). 160 pp.*

Reviewed by OSCAR GASS

JAMES MEADE, a former president of the Royal Economic Society, has published (in England) one of those rare economics books that one can recommend to every thoughtful person who takes an interest in the fundamental problems of contemporary societies. Some enterprising publisher should bring it out also in the United States. So far as my acquaintance extends, nothing of this character, scope, and quality has been published on our side of the Atlantic.

One must warn, however, that whoever goes to this little book in a mind to find the answers to the great economic problems, all ripe and ready, and as easy to swallow as aspirin tablets, will go away disappointed. Who goes prepared to concentrate his own thoughts, and to seek out elements of answers through wrestling with the author, will be rewarded.

As often, the non-professional

OSCAR GASS *is a consulting economist in private practice in Washington, D.C.*

The Positive Hero in Russian Literature

Rufus W. Mathewson, Jr. *Second Edition.* The positive hero is defined by the Soviets as one who "sets an example for the reader's behavior." As early as 1860, the merits of this ideal model were a central issue in the war between the literary imagination and ideological criticism that raged in Russia for a hundred years. In this new edition of a widely acclaimed work first published in 1958 and covering literary developments through 1946, five new chapters dealing with Pasternak, Solzhenitsyn, and Sinyavsky bring the story up to date and demonstrate how this battle has reappeared with dramatic clarity in the dissident literary movement since Stalin's death. $14.95

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reader enters a subject most readily by a door which the specialist sees as located in the middle of the house. I recommend that, in this case, the reader begin with Chapters V and VI, on "The Distribution of Income and Property." These chapters are, in my judgment, models of the sweet lucidity which so characterizes their author. But, whether the reader agrees with my appraisal or not, it is from these chapters that he can best decide whether this book is for him. Afterward, if interested, he can go back to Chapter I and follow the author's sequence.

THE political economy of a modern advanced society may be appraised as involving five basic targets. *First:* to keep the society's production activities on a moderately stable course of efficient growth, so as to be able to supply what its people will reasonably demand of goods and services. (These will increasingly be goods and services related to education, health, travel, and leisure—all costly things.) *Second:* to achieve a distribution of individual incomes in reasonable accord with its socially dominant idea of justice and, if at all possible, in not unbearable tension with the ideas of justice held by significant minority groups. *Third:* to replace, in some considerable degree, the incentives to good work and efficient management constituted in the past by fears of severe general business contractions, unemployment, and dire need, substituting for these ancient whips and spurs the more civilized motivations of shared responsibility, pride in craftsmanship, and pride in professionalism. *Fourth:* so to structure and limit economic centers of power and decision that they do not overshadow the political process, reserving the greater weight in the political scene to other, not-merely-economic structures of society and citizenship. *Fifth:* to find tolerable methods of relating the stance and reach of such a limited particular society to other societies of near-equals and also to the far-from-equals constituted by the poorer and poorest peoples.

These five targets should not be conceived as having been enumerated in an ascribed order of value. For some societies in some generations, what little we can determine of the right and the good may lie in choosing to strive for greater achievement in spheres I have numbered later, though at substantial sacrifices in some objectives listed earlier.

Meade's formulation of the objectives of a *radical* economic policy is more articulated than the above and more specifically egalitarian and libertarian. However, it is similar in thrust, with one important exception: he makes no reference to the objective I have enumerated third. Perhaps he does not think this the concern of an economist. To foster motivation toward work requiring effort and quality performance, is nevertheless one of the great problems in the successful functioning of an advanced economy—and distinctly so also in Britain and in the United States.

How Meade understands the egalitarian content of an intelligent radicalism he tells us, in principle, quite clearly:

> The intelligent radical is at heart an incurable egalitarian and is appalled by the gross inequalities which he observes in modern society. But he desires to cope with them by methods which are compatible with the maintenance of a free and efficient economic system. . . . The intelligent radical has no desire to put an end to private property, since he values the independence of action and the decentralization of power that can be achieved through a wide spread of the individual ownership of private property. But he does strongly object to the existing excessive inequalities of private property and to the large concentrations of power and privilege which they involve. His ideal society is a property-owning democracy in which every able-bodied citizen is both a worker and a property-owner and in which the existing inequalities both in income and in property are greatly moderated.

On this level of generality, all well and good. However, many who take no exception to Meade's general formulations of principle, as quoted above, will reject the particular measures he associates with these principles. This rejection will go directly to the core, his system of income distribution. The character of this system is determined by two structural members. *One:* in Meade's egalitarian society, the larger part of all personal consumption spending would be financed by a "social dividend," payable weekly to every family and single individual, solely on the basis of family size. Education and health services would be free, on a basis of qualification and need, though education partly perhaps on a repayable loan basis. The "social dividend" would be of a size to meet essential consumption spending needs, as publicly determined, and this "dividend" would accordingly be entirely non-taxable. *Two:* all families and single individuals would pay taxes on all income other than "the social dividend," *without any exemptions or deductions,* on a graduated scale equivalent to substantially over 40 per cent of income at the lower income end (with a 75 per cent tax segment at the very beginning!) and equivalent to substantially over 75 per cent at the top. Income available for consumption, consisting of the sum of the "social dividend" plus retained earned income, would therefore be far more equally distributed than on any hitherto proposed scheme of progressive taxes, even when supplemented by a "vagabond's wage," or a "negative income tax," or a "family allowance."

MEADE'S egalitarianism is certainly radical. In its distribution of income and property, our American society is far less egalitarian. Do we really wish to move drastically in the direction he suggests? Or is it merely our intention to shield the least fortunate and least capable against dire need? Certainly, in 1975, our successful American leadership people do not seriously hunger for a society of greater economic equality. Let us put aside pretense! For people who are accounted successful among us, any serious movement toward eco-

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nomic equality would be crushing. Such a movement would necessarily be painfully restrictive of their present privileged access to education, health care, travel, and other leisure activities. The median income of an American family is now in the general range of $12,500. A professor of economics regards himself as moderately successful with an income of $25,000. Independent professionals now view themselves as having entered the company of the successful when their incomes reach $50,000. A trade union can pay a salary of $75,000. Business targets are even higher. To those economically successful, personal security means an acquisition of property and pension rights that will assure a successful person's income throughout a lifetime.

These are objectives incompatible with economic equality. And they are the real, inwardly-valued objectives, in a society that seeks success in individual attainments and individual property holdings, not in any group sustenance. Among us, for almost all people, any verbal profession of egalitarianism has only such meaning or weight as is compatible with these inner attachments of personality. Who is it that we deceive when we say otherwise?

No such egalitarian pattern as Meade suggests has ever prevailed in any considerable community of an advanced modern society. In wrestling with Meade's proposals, the thoughtful reader will need to reflect whether he does really and truly support a movement to restructure his own society on so egalitarian a plan. Is it on these economic foundations that he wishes to build his political house? If not, what are his preferred alternative foundations of public authority and popular consent? It is because Meade's book may drive the alert and sensitive reader to reopen such questions that reading it can be extraordinarily rewarding.

IN A counter-treatise, it would appear necessary to establish significantly different conclusions from those that Meade embraces, on several other issues, both great and small. Among the great are issues concerning the achieving of what he calls "responsive" prices and also his proposals for fiscal fine-tuning of economic growth.

He writes extensively (Chapters III, IV, and VIII), and in part persuasively, of the merits of having prices, both for products and for labor, responsive to supply and demand in particular markets. Much of what he recommends, for a radical fiscal and monetary technique of economic management, is dependent on the establishment of this responsiveness. However, even though we do not reject, as altogether utopian, the feasibility of achieving such flexibility in pricing, we must still ask, starting from our present practices in business and labor, "How do we get there, from here?" For such a dilemma, the Germans have the conundrum, "How does the cat get across the water?" I do not believe that Meade has shown us how to make this crossing. And he has put outside his scope the real, painful present question: Since we are not across the water, since on this side we cannot have more demand expansion without more price inflation, what are we to do *now?* Are we to opt for more unemployment, or should we chance more price inflation?

In respect to "fine-tuning" of economic growth, I suspect he has gone badly wrong. He proposes a "Stabilization Commission" of a kind going beyond both political practicability and economic knowledge. This commission would consist of "independent wise men." It would have power to make changes "weekly" in taxes and in the supply of money. Politically, a commission with these powers is doubtfully compatible with a parliamentary system, and it is surely quite incompatible with our congressional system. Economically, given the present inadequacy of knowledge and reasoned conviction, it is embracing false hopes to put reliance on a commission's discretion to make weekly changes

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in fiscal and monetary affairs. In the greatest economic recession of the present generation, that which began in October 1973, it took twelve months for the majority of professional economists in the United States to recognize that a serious recession was going on. It took two more months—fourteen months in all—before the White House began to acknowledge that the very name "recession" might be appropriate. How is such long-term ignorance abated by a power, in an appointed group of "independent wise men," to make fiscal and monetary changes, from week to week?

In respect to economic growth, presently attainable fine-tuning is a delusive reliance. In respect to economic justice, stabilizing income provision should be made entirely independent of the degree of success that any economic tuning may achieve. In this latter point, one is not dissenting from Meade but, as most often, agreeing with him. He is reassuring company.

Maestro

TOSCANINI. By GEORGE R. MAREK. *Atheneum. 321 pp. $12.95.*

Reviewed by EDWARD ROTHSTEIN

IN 1886, a nineteen-year-old cellist in a touring Italian orchestra was unexpectedly called to the podium before a performance of *Aida* to substitute for an absent conductor. It was Arturo Toscanini's debut. Over seventy years later, the night before he died, Toscanini might have been recalling that occasion when he awoke briefly from a coma to sing a phrase from the same opera. In the period between these two, vastly different, evocations of Verdi, Toscinini lived a life of imposing drama and musical achievement, which George Marek, a longtime personal acquaintance of the *maestro* and formerly the director of the classical record division of RCA, attempts to portray in this biography.

Toscanini lived the kind of life for which biographers are grateful, but he has not been done justice in the biographies which have appeared over the last forty years, including the present one. Toscanini's personality was so strong, his influence so powerful, that worship weighs the writer's pen. Marek's book begins:

> Toscanini said to Walter, his son, "Walter, if after my death you write my biography, I'll come and haunt you." Then Walter asked me to do it; I felt I couldn't. I felt I couldn't because I loved him too much and I feared that what I had to say would turn out to be a monophonic paean.

Though what has emerged is still a paean of sorts, it does at times take on stereophonic dimensions, for Marek is aided, as well as hampered, by his subject's vitality and importance. Toscanini helped shape the operatic and symphonic worlds of this century. He conducted the world premiere of *La Bohème,* and the Italian premieres of *Siegfried* and *Salome.* He directed the Metropolitan Opera for seven years, La Scala for many more, and led the New York Philharmonic through ten legendary seasons; and, at the age of seventy, he began a career of seventeen years conducting the NBC Symphony, with which he recorded most of what now amounts to his objective musical legacy. These recordings were best-sellers in the 50's. Seven million people heard his radio broadcasts. No serious listener was untouched by his musical vision.

Marek draws from his own personal recollections, and those of others, to paint a biographical portrait rich in anecdote. The familiar stories of Toscanini's "tantrums" are told, but so are many others, paradoxical fragments which make the musical figure even more intriguing. Toscanini cheered at wrestling matches, and translated Shakespeare. He regarded his lifelong marriage as sacred, but he slept in many different beds. He was a musical rationalist, but a superstitious man.

The intensities of Toscanini's personality carried over to his politics as well; Marek's recounting of his struggle against Fascism is particularly moving. In the early 20's Toscanini had stood as a candidate for office under the Italian Fascist symbol, but this was a sympathy which quickly turned to hatred. At La Scala he refused to play the Fascist hymn or display a portrait of Mussolini. He was personally warned by *Il Duce,* he was assaulted, his passport was confiscated, his phone was tapped. Under the pressure of worldwide protest Toscanini was finally permitted to leave Italy for Germany, but he did not stay long. In 1933 he signed a cable to Hitler protesting the boycott of Jewish musicians, and withdrew from all performances. He donated his services as first conductor of the Palestine Orchestra. All through the war years he raised money in the U.S. for refugees from fascism.

Yet facts and anecdotes, however fascinating, do not in themselves make a coherent biography. Marek's book is an undisciplined portrait, and it leaves the reader with little organized understanding of a highly disciplined man, or his music. The loose, admiring narrative is frequently interrupted by speculations about musical genius and personality, and by stories about composers and performers. Even when Toscanini is dealt with, he almost gets lost in anecdote.

Marek further obscures Toscanini by employing a narrative style usually reserved for the biographical novel. Though his affectionate voice adds to the warmth and enjoyment provided by the book, it frequently clouds its subject with romantic and fictional overtones. Toscanini, Marek writes, when a boy in Parma, loved to "listen to the lazy music of the river, the provocative noise the bees made in the sun." Did Toscanini once mention the appeal of musical nature or is this Marek's invention? We are not told. The same style is used even to communicate the nature of Toscanini's musical interpretation. When he conducted, "One felt as if one saw the first spring and walked in a pristine meadow." Perhaps, but this brings us no closer to the music. For elucidation of the performances the reader needs

EDWARD ROTHSTEIN, *a new contributor, is a young musician and writer who works in a New York publishing firm.*

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Samuel Antek's *This Was Toscanini,* a musical memoir graced with photographs by Robert Hupka, and, at the least, B. H. Haggin's *The Toscanini Musicians Knew,* a book of recollections which, with Haggin's minimal intrusion upon his subject, recalls Toscanini's own methods. These books are superb portraits which bring the reader closer to Toscanini by revealing the source of his musical power.

EVEN in a book as diffuse as Marek's, it is possible to sense that Toscanini's life held a single unifying force, a theme, which also suffused his music. Alfred Einstein wrote, after listening to Toscanini conduct, "Greatest discipline becomes greatest freedom." The discipline was in service to the text and composer; the freedom was found in the artistic result. "He saw himself," writes Marek, "as the advocate of the composer, pleading the composer's cause, not his own." This was his gift to the 20th-century style, the subordination of self to art, replacing the romantic notion of self-expression in art.

The score was the ultimate arbiter; the composer's will was the ideal. Toscanini, to be sure, constantly reinterpreted that ideal. He listened to other interpretations, and he loved the conducting of his protegé, the young Guido Cantelli, but he was constant in his demands for absolute concentration and allegiance to the text. If he felt either quality was lacking his comments could be devastating. After hearing a Stokowski performance Toscanini wrote a letter which his son Walter fortunately intercepted: "Dear Maestro Stokowski: I have known two assassins in my life. One was Hitler, the other was Mussolini. You are the third."

Toscanini could be no less harsh with the orchestra. Broken batons, smashed watches, insults, and screaming were the signs of his frustration as he strove to mirror his musical ideas in the playing of a hundred disparate individuals. He was as hard on himself; after one outburst he dug his nails into his chest so hard that the wounds bled. The moments of musical beauty he achieved made the mo-

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ments of anger seem all the more bizarre. Toscanini was not unaware of what he was doing. "*Cher Maître,*" pleaded Landowska, "if I could but once play with you I would die happily." "*Chère Madame,*" Toscanini replied, "don't play with me—and live happily."

Toscanini was a meticulous craftsman, with a perfect ear and memory, but his art was more subtle, and open to controversy. "Any *asino* can conduct—but to make music, eh? Is *difficile*!" "*Cantare,*" he pleaded with the orchestra—sing, sustain. Those who played with him, those who have listened to him the most, point to this quality, the singing phrase, set in a context of elemental energy and clarity, revealing the composer's will. His critics maintain precisely the opposite, that his tempos do not allow the phrase to sing, that the craggy energy destroys the clarity, that in imposing his iron will upon the music Toscanini destroyed the content. It is difficult to mediate this debate, but the question of the composer's will deserves some attention as it was the central motivation of Toscanini's life-project.

The meaning of that project is not as clear as it may at first seem, for even Toscanini's "ideal" interpretation of a work is in fact and at best an approximation, within the limits of musical notation, of what the composer heard in his mind's ear. Music, once written, takes on a life of its own. The text moves through time as a static work, but to be heard it must be retranslated into sound, filtered through the personality of an interpreter (who will necessarily transform it in keeping with his own physical and mental character) and the interpretive style of his era. That interpretive style exists for the listener as well. Who can listen to Beethoven with the ears of the early 1800's, ears which had never heard Brahms, Stravinsky, or Stockhausen? Historical influence works in both directions.

The modern conceptions of original instrumentation and "Ur-text" editions—extensions of Toscanini's own goals of musical interpretation—must be seen in perspective. There are responsible and irresponsible performances in all styles, on any instrument. The critical difference is that between manipulation and revelation, between an egocentric reveling in musical prowess and the sharing of musical discovery. The latter was the secret of Toscanini's fidelity to text, the meaning of his discipline.

A great performance goes even further. It circumscribes the work with its own consistent laws, limiting it by presenting a *single* interpretation, but revealing it by showing it to be complete, unambiguous. It becomes both personal and universal. Artur Schnabel believed that the entire composition should be anticipated as one unit before being recreated by the performer, and should then be *exhaled* as though in one breath. This unitary conception is given form by the laws of interpretation which, once created, conceal themselves, for if they are attuned to the work, they become natural, part of the structure of the music; the work emerges as an artistic whole. This was the meaning of Toscanini's freedom.

This is also what can be heard in the RCA recordings. When we listen to Toscanini's performance of the Prelude and Love Death from *Tristan,* or to the *Missa Solemnis,* the Beethoven symphonies, or to Brahms and Verdi, we really hear that paradoxical freedom which arises out of the discipline of tempo and score. We hear the exhalation of the music, formed with an intensity it is difficult to ignore; most other performances pale in comparison. Toscanini had his weaknesses, but it is always possible, with him, to feel the dedication which was the foundation of every performance. His hand is of course recognizable—it would be impossible to conduct without interpreting, without transmuting the "in-itself." Frustration grows out of this circumstance but so does possibility, and Toscanini must have known that music's plasticity is also its virtue; it grants itself anew to each individual, both performer and listener.

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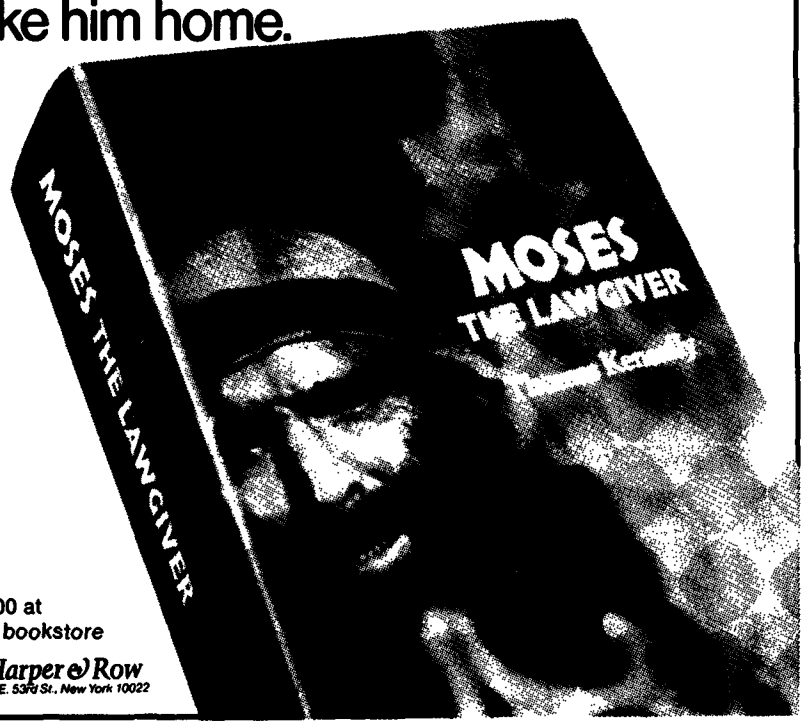

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The difficulties of musical interpretation apply also to biography, for if in music the text must be translated into sounds, in biography the life must be translated into words. If the biographer wishes to reveal his subject, he must also give it form. And, as in music, personal whims must be disciplined. It is in this sense that Marek fails to reveal Toscanini. He pleases himself with numerous extraneous themes and melodies, and incessant *rubato*—a romantic effusiveness that contrasts unfavorably with Toscanini's lean style.

Toscanini did not wish his biography to be written, perhaps because he felt that it was the composer, rather than the conductor, who deserved the attention; he had said all he could in his concerts. Those sounds, unlike the compositions, have died, but we may be thankful that Toscanini's last bits of testimony remain on record.

Group Success

RACE AND ECONOMICS. By THOMAS SOWELL. *McKay. 276 pp. $9.95.*

Reviewed by ELLIOTT ABRAMS

RACIAL and ethnic relations in the United States have long been seen as a great morality play in which injustice is caused by, and will be ended by attacking prejudice. Thomas Sowell has a more pragmatic notion. He scorns "the view in some quarters that the economic advancement of minorities is the result of tolerance, which is the result of ideas promoted in missionary fashion." Instead, he argues in *Race and Economics* that the failure or success of racial and ethnic minorities in America is to be explained by solid economic and historical analysis.

What Sowell does in this extremely useful book is to apply logic and economic analysis to group history. His conclusions, which defy the conventional wisdom, are fascinating. It is widely thought, for example, that the position of the American black community results from slavery, and that weak family structure is a particularly important inheritance from slavery because strong family structure correlates with economic advancement. Sowell, who uses intergroup comparisons whenever possible throughout the book to test out theories, challenges these conclusions with two questions. If the effects of slavery prevent economic success, why are West Indian black immigrants (whose ancestors were also enslaved) economically successful? And if family structure correlates with economic success, why are Italian-Americans not more successful?

Sowell offers answers to both questions. As to a stable family structure, it is a necessary but not sufficient condition for economic progress: "Stable families imply emotional strength and stable values transmitted to the children, but the particular nature of these values influences the uses to which the emotional strength is put, and therefore the chance of economic progress." Italian immigrants from rural backgrounds had not developed and therefore could not transmit those values, such as a concern for education, most conducive to economic success in large modern cities.

As to the first question, Sowell's discussion of slavery takes up a major portion of the book. He describes in detail the development of American slavery and contrasts it with slavery in South America. As the experience of West Indians in this country demonstrates, slavery *per se* will not always produce traits antithetical to economic success. The economic setbacks of American blacks are attributable to the peculiar characteristics of American slavery, which Sowell calls "the most thorough human subjugation" of all the forms in which slavery has appeared. Among its other unique characteristics, American slavery took place in a democratic context, which meant both that the slaveowner had unlimited control over his inalienable "property," and that some rationale had to be developed to reconcile slavery with democratic values. The

ELLIOTT ABRAMS *was until recently assistant counsel of the Senate Subcommittee on Investigations. His article, "The Democrats' Dilemma," appeared in our February issue.*

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Saul Friedländer is professor of history and international relations at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the Graduate Institute of International Relations in Geneva. His books include *Pius XII and the Third Reich: A Documentation* and *Prelude to Downfall: Hitler and the United States 1939-1941.* Mahmoud Hussein is the pseudonym for the Egyptian writers Bahgat Elnadi and Adel Rifaat, authors of *Class Conflict in Egypt: 1945-1970.*

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response, Sowell states, was racism, a theory which excused the subhuman treatment of blacks on the grounds that they were in fact subhuman.

Most important, American slavery was plantation slavery, whereas in Latin America, with its pattern of urban slavery, slaves were cast as skilled workmen or artisans and enjoyed varying degrees of individual responsibility and autonomy. Sowell concludes:

> The degree of subjugation required by plantation slavery was incompatible with the development of either work patterns or personality traits beneficial to a free man. By contrast, systems of slavery such as that in Cuba, in which most slaves were not totally subjugated, provided many gradations of conditions through which an individual could move on the road to freedom, acquiring the knowledge, experience, and personal development to prepare him for ready transition to the world of a free man.

In the third section of his book Sowell applies principles of economics to the current racial scene. His insistence on logical consistency leads him to positions which will, to say the least, not meet with universal approval. For example, his examination of the question of "exploitation" by ghetto merchants focuses on the extra costs they must face: crime, high insurance rates, the difficulty of attracting efficient workers or low-cost capital. In view of his increased costs, a ghetto merchant must charge more than a suburban supermarket just to stay in business. As Sowell says, "far from being a situation of unusually high profits, it is a situation where it is hard to break even—even when charging higher prices."

SOWELL reaches similarly unfashionable conclusions in applying economic analysis to the role of government in racial matters. He points out that free-market economic competition will tend to *eliminate* racial discrimination, for discrimination means underutilization of available labor and, therefore, lower profits. "Economic theory would lead," he writes, "to an expectation of more discrimination in markets with externally controlled and externally limited profit rates than in unstructured and uncontrolled competitive markets. In general, this is what is found." Discrimination lowers profits; when profits are limited to begin with, the cost of discrimination is thereby lessened. Sowell points to a long history of discrimination in such regulated industries as banking and railroading, and in non-profit institutions such as philanthropic foundations. As for government, as an employer it "is in a non-profit-making situation. This means, among other things, that racial discrimination is free, except for political repercussions." In the face of such repercussions, government employment policies have undergone a great reversal, and in many areas the result is now an overrepresentation of blacks.

For those whose goal is fair-employment practices, Sowell implicitly urges two possible tacks: political pressure, and a return to the free-market economy. He is a supporter of both lines of action, and is careful to point out how often well-meaning interference with market forces has resulted in harm to the very minorities who were supposed to be helped. He is a critic, for example, of minimum-wage laws which he says price many workers, especially young and black workers, out of the market because their level of skills does not justify paying them at the legally established minimum rate. Sowell's comment is typical of the toughminded analyses which fill this book:

> One consequence . . . is that where 19th-century disadvantaged minorities were often overworked, 20th-century disadvantaged minorities are often unemployed or on relief. The question here is not which one of these conditions is better for the individual immediately involved, but which offers better prospects for the group as a whole to advance. Dependency and lack of job experience affect not only the first generation, but the generations that follow. . . . High unemployment rates mean not only reduced current income but . . . increased risk of falling into the vicious cycle of family dependency.

Sowell is especially concerned with "cultural" factors in economic advancement, and points to the important contribution made by such factors to the economic progress of groups like Jews and Japanese-Americans. "If the history of American ethnic groups shows anything," Sowell says, "it is how large a role has been played by attitudes—and particularly attitudes of self-reliance." For public policy, this analysis has quite troubling implications, for self-reliance cannot be inculcated by federal programs:

> Perhaps the greatest dilemma in attempts to raise ethnic minority income is that those methods which have historically proved successful—self-reliance, work skills, education, business experience—are all slow developing, while those methods which are more direct and immediate—job quotas, charity, subsidies, preferential treatment—tend to undermine self-reliance and pride of achievement in the long run.

There is no ready solution for this dilemma, although Sowell maintains an optimistic tone. In large part, he is optimistic because he understands that the history of ethnic minorities has never been one of overnight success. For most minorities the struggle has been long and hard, indeed so long that Sowell calls it "an intergenerational relay race," won only by second or third generations.

Sowell is modest about his goal in *Race and Economics*. "Economic analysis is not philosophical justification, nor is that its purpose," he writes. "What economic analysis can do is help predict the consequences of various possible ways of dealing with the problem." Yet the ability to predict is precisely what is missing in the planning and execution of a great number of social programs. *Race and Economics* is valuable both as a call for the objective, logical analysis of ethnic and racial relations and of the role of government in modifying those relations, and as a model of how such analysis can best be performed.

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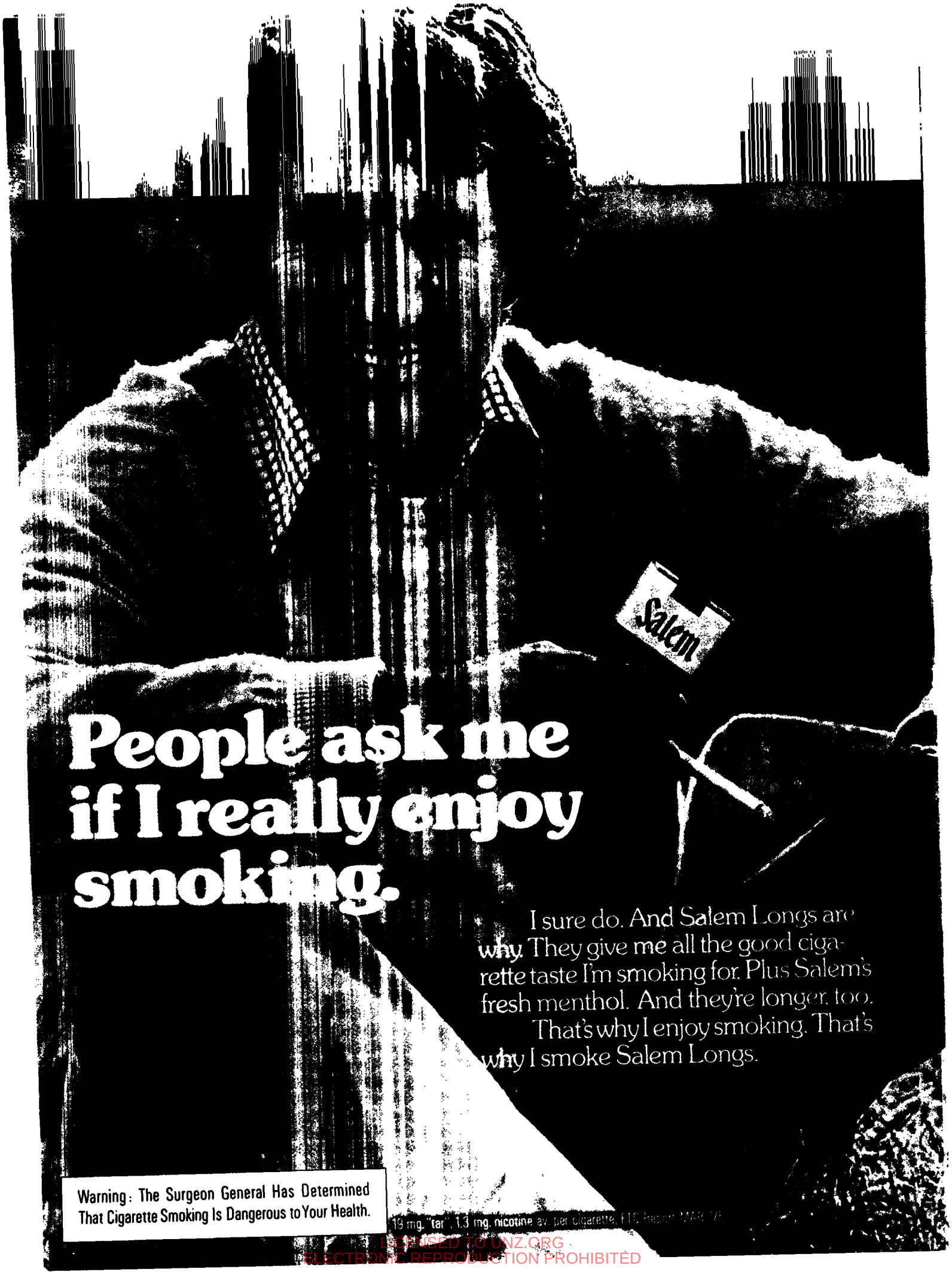
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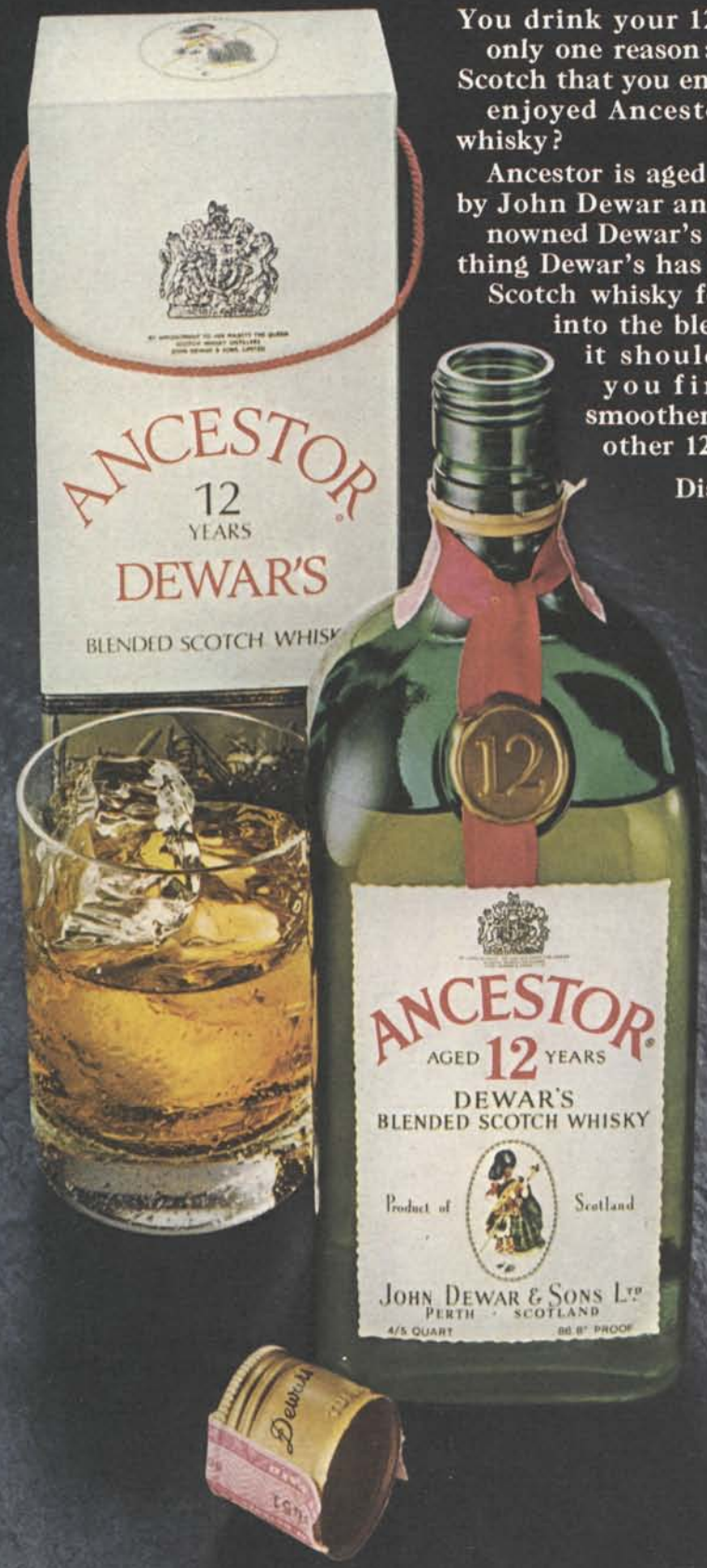

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